

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

JN Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1913, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York. Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter.

No. 401.

NEW YORK, JUNE 6, 1913.

Price 5 Cents.

STRIKING A GOOD THING —OR— COLLEGE CHUMS IN BUSINESS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO COLLEGE CHUMS.

"Nick!"

"Dick!"

"Shake, old man. Mighty glad to see you," said Dick Danvers, grasping the extended hand of his college chum, Nick Norcross.

"You're not more glad to see me than I am to see you," said Nick. "What are you doing here?"

"Looking for a job."

"So am I."

"The advertisement indicated that only one position was open. We can't both get it."

"That stands to reason; but as there's a room full of applicants ahead of us neither of us may get it."

"It won't be the first time I've been turned down since I started to find something to do."

"Nor me. But I thought your rich uncle who was paying your way through college had a fine position in prospect for you."

"So he had, if I had put in the four years, as he expected me to. But you know the first year saw my finish just as it saw yours. The fact that you are looking for work like me indicates that your rich aunt has treated you the same as my uncle handed it to me, because I had to pack up and come home in disgrace, as he put it."

"You're a good guesser. My respected aunt handed me \$100 and told me she was through with me."

"My uncle dismissed me from further consideration with the same amount."

"We seem to have fared exactly alike," grinned Nick.

"And we are now both looking for the same job."

"I wish there were two jobs open in this place and we both got them, so we could be together."

"So do I, but a fellow can't always have his wish."

"You're ahead of me and have the first shy at the position."

"If one of those chaps in the room is selected I won't get any shy at it."

"Why didn't you get here in time to take the head of the line?"

"Why didn't you?"

"I was delayed."

"The advertisement said call at eight. I came ten minutes before that hour and all those fellows were here before me."

"If the early bird catches this worm we'll not be in it."

"The early bird doesn't always catch the worm, I have noticed."

"He gets the first chance at it. There goes number one now. If he measures up to the requirements that will mean a shut out for the rest of us."

"We'll have to take it philosophically."

"There goes number two."

"I didn't see number one come out."

"He might have been sent away through another door, or is being held till the whole bunch is given a hearing. If you or I, or one of the others, pan out better than he, he will have to make way for the lucky one."

"Number three is going in now. I guess we'll all get a chance."

"I think we're all entitled to that much consideration for coming here."

The line melted by degrees and the two college chums finally reached the door communicating with the manager's office.

In five minutes it was opened and Dick was admitted.

"Wish you luck, old fellow," said Nick, as his friend passed inside.

Dick found himself in the presence of a well-dressed, shrewd-looking man, seated at a roll-top desk, the pigeon-holes of which were choked with papers.

The man pointed at the vacant chair beside his desk.

"Name, please," he said.

"Richard Danvers."

"Age?"

"Nearly nineteen."

"What counting-room experience have you had?"

"None."

The manager put down his stylographic pen and looked at the boy.

"I think our advertisement said 'some experience.'"

"I admit it did, but how is a chap to get experience unless he gets the chance to accumulate it?"

"That's true enough, but we do not profess to be a kindergarten. Where have you worked?"

"Nowhere. Only been out of college about a month."

"Oh, I see. Did you graduate?"

"No, sir. If I had I wouldn't be looking for this position."

"You would have aimed higher, eh?"

"A position would have been provided for me."

"By whom?"

"My uncle."

"Why hasn't he provided for you?"

"Because I got into a scrape that led to my dismissal from college. To punish me he turned me loose to make my own way without help from him."

"You are frank in admitting this handicap."

"I never go behind the truth."

"Stick to that, young man. It is a valuable asset."

"I mean to."

"You were living with your uncle, I take it, until the unfortunate——"

"Yes, sir."

"From which I infer that your parents are dead?"
"They are."

"Where are you living now?"

"At a private boarding-house on Prescott street."

"As you have had no business experience I'm afraid—how is your nerve?"

"Nerve, sir?"

"Are you plucky? What would you do if brought suddenly face to face with a strenuous situation?"

"I'd meet it as my judgment suggested."

"If your employer's interests were at stake would you stand by your guns?"

"I certainly would if that were possible," said Dick, resolutely.

The manager took note of his speech and manner, jotted something down opposite the applicant's name, and pointing to a closed door told Dick to step into the next room.

He did so as the manager called out "Next," to the office boy on guard at the door, who immediately admitted Nick.

The interview between Nick and the manager was very similar to that in which Dick had figured.

The manager was not a little surprised at the fact that Nick had also been dropped from college for some escapade, which led to his banishment from his aunt's home, just as Dick had been discarded by his uncle for a similar offence, and also that Nick had no parents either.

"Upon my word, young man, you and the young fellow who preceded you appear to be in the same boat. May I ask if you two are acquainted, and from the same college, and concerned in the same lark that brought you into all your trouble?"

"Yes, sir. We were chums at college," replied Nick.

"I thought so. What college were you turned out of?"

Nick told him.

"The very one I graduated from. It is a rather poor recommendation you and your friend bring with you in the hope of securing employment here, and yet I think I will give you two a trial."

"What, both of us?"

"Yes. This is a large contracting firm. We have a big road job on just now some ten miles from this town, and we employ a large force of foreigners on it. Every second Saturday the cashier goes out to the scene of operations and pays the men off. He carries with him a considerable sum of money in his bag, and a clerk goes with him as a bodyguard. Both go armed as a matter of precaution, not because of any trouble expected from our laborers, though they are a hard lot, as a rule, but to meet any emergency which might arise on the way. Nothing has happened so far, and the cashier has made many trips, but I believe in being prepared just the same. The clerk who has been in the habit of accompanying the cashier has left our employ to better himself, and I advertised for another to take his place in the counting-room. As he will go with the cashier on his pay trips I want one whose nerve can be depended on. After interviewing your friend I decided that in that respect at least he seemed to fill the bill. Now that I've sized you up I don't see much to choose between you. Inasmuch as we shall need another clerk in three or four weeks I have concluded to give both of you a chance to make good. A week's trial in the counting-room will give me a line on your abilities, and if you both promise well you will both stay. Now join your friend in that room while I see the rest of the applicants," said the manager.

Nick got up, walked to the closed door and entered the next room, which was the drafting-room, and where he found Dick seated watching the work of a young civil engineer, who was seated on a stool in front of a long table covered with plans, blue prints and printed specifications.

CHAPTER II

THE COLLEGE CHUMS INTRODUCED INTO BUSINESS.

Nick glided across the room and seated himself beside his chum.

"Shake, old chap," he said, in a low tone, "we're both slated for a trial here."

"Both?" ejaculated Dick, in pleased surprise.

"So the manager informed me," returned Nick. "He said if we make good we'll stay."

"Mercy, that's good news! I didn't think I'd be taken on, and was surprised when I was sent in here, which appeared to indicate that if no more desirable candidate turned up I would catch on. So you've been selected, too? Maybe he intends to decide between us after he has gone through the rest of the bunch."

"No. He told me another clerk would be needed within a month, and he had concluded to let me have that job. Good idea, I think, to break a fellow in in advance. Then he's ready when you want him."

"That's right. Luck has turned our way at last. I intend to prove to my rich uncle that I can get on without his backing."

"And my wealthy aunt will discover that I can exist without calling on her pocketbook."

"Shake again," said Dick.

"Say, did the manager ask you if you had good nerve?"

"Yes. Kind of surprised me the way he seemed to make a point of it. I did not know that a mere clerk was expected to be supplied with an unusual amount of courage. I wonder if he expects us to sleep on the premises and protect the safe? What do you suppose he asked me?"

"What?"

"He asked me what I would do if brought suddenly face to face with a strenuous situation."

"What answer did you give him?" grinned Nick.

"I gave him to understand that I'd meet it like a man. I wonder what he was driving at?"

"I know."

"You do?"

"He told me."

"What did he tell you?"

"The firm is building a road ten miles from here and employs quite a number of men—foreigners mostly. They're paid off every two weeks. That takes quite a bunch of money. The cashier pays them on the spot. You will have to go with him as a bodyguard, with a gun in your pocket, to help protect the money en route."

"The manager told you that?"

"Yes."

"The work is being done ten miles from here, you say, and he fears that some time the cashier might be held up on the way. Is that the idea?"

"That's the idea."

"I see the point now. Well, I guess the manager will find I can hold my end up if anything like that happens. We'll travel in a high-power car, I suppose, so in order to hold us up the rascals would have put an obstruction in the road. The moment I saw anything like that ahead I'd get ready for business."

"Can you shoot?"

"I think I could hit something smaller than a house at close range."

"If it was moving?"

"That would depend on how fast it was moving. If several men tried to hold the pay car up I guess I could get a couple of them. As I don't imagine the cashier would be idle, I fancy the attack would be a failure. Did the manager say that an attempt had been made on the car?"

"No. There hasn't been any trouble yet, but he doesn't want the cashier to be caught napping."

"That shows he's level-headed. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

At that moment the office boy opened the door and called them both into the manager's office.

"Let me see, you're Danvers?" said the manager, looking at Dick.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I'll give you the advertised position on trial. As you have had no office experience you'll be given the chance to learn routine work. As a college man I have taken it for granted that your writing is good, and that you're quick at figures. I see no reason why you shouldn't make good. Your wages to start will be"—and the manager mentioned the amount. "I suppose that is satisfactory to you?"

"Yes, sir. I did not expect much in the way of wages to begin with. What I wanted was a position with some prospects, so that I would work up."

"I think you'll find that here. Our business is expanding. Promotion is certain for those who deserve it. Those who only work by the clock are not likely to get out of their rut, and they are always in danger of being superseded by others more wide awake to their own interests. We have one or two chaps in the office who I fancy won't last. They wouldn't be there now if—but no matter. If you measure up to my anticipations, your wages will be raised in a month."

"Thank you, sir. It won't be my fault if I don't prove valuable to you. I think I can say the same for my friend Norcross. You'll find him up to the minute."

"I trust I shall," smiled the manager. "Now, Norcross, I'm going to turn you over to the chief clerk to learn the

rudiments of office work. The rest will be up to you. Your pay will be the same, for the present, as Danvers'."

The manager tapped a bell and the office boy appeared.

"Tell Mr. Brown I wish to see him," said the office mogul.

The boy passed into the drafting-room and so on to the counting-room.

He came back with the cashier and paymaster.

"Mr. Brown," said the manager, "this is Richard Danvers. He is slated for the position of assistant paymaster made vacant by the resignation of Jordan."

"I thought Vickers was to have the position," ventured the cashier. "He told me he had spoken to Mr. Bradley, and that the senior partner was in favor of advancing him."

"Do you want him for your assistant? Would you prefer to take him on your semi-monthly trips?" said the manager, sharply.

The cashier looked embarrassed.

"I hardly expect to have any say in the matter, sir," he said.

"Never mind that. I have asked you two questions. I would like a frank reply. I will add a third one—do you think Vickers is the kind of young man to depend upon in a possible emergency?"

"Since you insist on an answer, sir, I will say no to the three questions. My hesitation was due to the fact that Vickers stands well with the head of the firm."

"I understand. Mr. Bradley spoke to me about giving Vickers the position, but I vetoed it at once and he did not insist when I explained my opposition. This young man will fill all the requirements of the position in my estimation, but he is fresh from college and has had no business training. I turn him over to you to look after. In a week let me know how he is getting on."

"Very well, sir," said the cashier.

"As we shall have another opening shortly I have thought proper to hire this other young man too. His name is Nicholas Norcross. He is also from college and ignorant of office routine. Hand him over to Fox, with instruction to coach him in his department. Here is a memo of the wages these newcomers are to receive. That is all. Take them away with you."

The manager, whose name the college chums presently learned, was Thomas Kent, turned to his desk, and the two new employees of the contracting firm of Bradley, Nichols & Co., followed the cashier to be introduced to their new scene of action.

CHAPTER III.

VICKERS.

There was a craning of necks among the clerks in the counting-room when the cashier came in with the two new men.

One new hand was expected, for everybody knew that the manager had advertised for a clerk, not necessarily to fill the vacancy left by the withdrawal of Jordan, because Henry Vickers, who stood well with the head of the firm, owing to the fact that he was a distant family connection of Bradley's, had told around that he was to be made assistant to the cashier; but two new hands were not looked for.

The cashier called Fox, a sandy-featured, sharp-looking young man, who was not popular in the office except with Vickers, to his desk, introduced him to Nick, and had a short talk with him.

Fox nodded and told Nick to follow.

Then to the surprise of the office force Dick was installed at the desk lately used by Jordan.

This could mean only one thing—that the newcomer was to take up the late assistant cashier's work.

Furtive glances were cast at Vickers to see how he took this unexpected state of affairs.

Privately, the other clerks enjoyed a secret satisfaction at the look of consternation and rage that came over the face of Vickers at that moment, for he was cordially detested by the rest of the force, Fox, perhaps, excepted.

He had a sour disposition, was inclined to be indolent, and had sneakish and bullying propensities.

While he had never been put to the test the opinion prevailed that he was a coward, and was not above resorting to any dirty trick to avoid responsibility for his shortcomings.

Fox, who never missed anything that was going on, saw where Dick was established.

He chuckled to himself and then started in to put Nick at work at the vacant half of a tall desk near by.

After that he sauntered over to Vickers' desk.

"Looks like you have been dumped out of the promotion you expected by the new hand," he said. "I thought you were sure of annexing that desk."

"Oh, I guess that fellow was put there merely for the time being," said Vickers. "It would be an outrage for a new man to step in here over my head, not to speak of the rest. Mr. Bradley promised to speak to the manager about giving me the raise."

"Why didn't Bradley give it to you himself? He's the head boss."

"Kent makes all the appointments."

"But if Bradley told him to make you assistant cashier Kent would have to do it, wouldn't he?"

"I suppose he would, but he doesn't like me."

"Kent don't?"

"No. He's scoured on me for some reason."

"Then you can gamble on it you're out of your raise. That chap must be some friend of Kent's, for a new man is not likely to step into that job without he has a pull with the manager."

"If that is so I'll get square with him," gritted Vickers.

"Who, Kent?" grinned Fox.

"No, the new fellow," said Vickers, glaring in Dick's direction.

"Better not get caught at it, for if he's a friend of the manager's you may get the G. B."

"Yes?" sneered Vickers. "I guess Bradley would have something to say about that."

"Well, if you had as big a pull with the head boss as I thought you had seems to me there ought to be no question about you getting the assistant-cashiership."

"I'm going to see about it as soon as Bradley comes back from Cincinnati."

"He won't be back for a week maybe, and that will give the new men the chance to break in in good shape. Bradley maybe won't care to do anything then, particularly if the chap is a friend of the manager's. Kent has a bigger pull with the firm than you have."

"Oh, blame Kent!" hissed Vickers.

Fox walked off chuckling.

He was the professed friend of Vickers, but it may be doubted if he was his real friend.

Then they went around a great deal together of nights, and Fox steered Vickers into many questionable resorts.

Vickers believed Fox would do anything for him he wanted, but whether Fox would was yet to be proved.

He might if he saw anything in it.

The morning passed away and when noon arrived the clerks began going out at intervals to get their lunch.

Vickers and Fox went out together about half-past twelve.

The cashier told Dick that he had better go at that hour, as he went himself at one, and one of them must be in the office to attend to visitors.

"Can Norcross go out when I do?" said Dick.

"I guess so, unless Mr. Fox has given him something special to do," replied Brown.

Dick went over to Nick's desk.

"Did Mr. Fox tell you when to go to your lunch?"

"No, he said nothing about it," said Nick.

"Then put on your hat and come on."

The two passed out together.

They went to a nearby restaurant and took a table near the door.

They did not notice that Fox and Vickers were two tables away.

"How do you like it as far as you've got?" said Nick.

"First rate. How are you coming on?"

"All right."

"How do you find that fellow Fox? I don't fancy him much, do you know. I'm glad I'm not under him."

"He's treated me all right so far," said Nick. "There's a clerk at the desk between mine and the railing—Fox seems friendly with him—who looks like a sneak to me. That means we must give him a wide berth."

"I noticed that fellow. He looks grouchy. I never get friendly with those kind of people. The other clerks look like decent enough fellows."

"I spoke to one and he was very pleasant."

"Well, we're a pair of lucky birds, old man. We're with a big firm that seems to be growing."

They finished their meal and returned to the office.

Work stopped for the day at five o'clock, and when all

hands put away their books and papers, and went to get their hats, Dick and Nick got acquainted with several of their office companions.

Fox was a kind of sub-boss, and he should have passed a few words with Dick, to get acquainted with him.

He didn't go near him, however.

Vickers was standing outside when Dick and Nick came out.

"Say, I'd like to see you a minute," he said to Dick.

"Certainly," replied Dick, pleasantly, though he didn't like the clerk's manner, which was somewhat aggressive.

Nick stopped, too.

"I don't want you. You can go on," said Vickers, in a nasty tone, to Nick.

Nick looked at him, said nothing and moved off slowly, stopping near a lamp-post.

Vickers turned to Dick.

"What's your name?" he said, glaring at the new assistant cashier.

"Richard Danvers. What's yours?"

"My name is Vickers. I want to know if the manager hired you as assistant to the cashier?"

"So I understand."

"So you understand?" sneered Vickers. "Don't you know whether he did or not?"

"I'm only on trial, but I expect to make good."

"Oh, you expect to hold on to the job?"

"Why not? When you first started in you expected to hold on, didn't you?"

"I knew I'd hold on."

"Then you were experienced in your line when you came to the office?"

"That has nothing to do with it. I'm a relative of Mr. Bradley's."

"Is that so?" said Dick, regarding the clerk with new interest.

"That's so," said Vickers, expanding his chest. "If I were you I wouldn't be certain of holding down the job you're in. I've taken a fancy to it myself, and when Bradley gets back from Cincinnati I'm going to see him about it. Probably you'll be put at my desk! If you are I'll put you wise to anything that's not clear to you. Get me?"

"Thanks," responded Dick, dryly.

Then he recalled what had passed between the manager and the cashier about Vickers and the job of assistant cashier.

The clerk had already asked for the position and his application had been turned down hard by the manager, who clearly had no great opinion of him.

"You're welcome," said Vickers, in a condescending tone.

"You think I'll be switched, then?" said Dick, with an inward chuckle.

"It's a safe bet that you will when I see the head of the house."

"Don't you like your present job?"

"I like it well enough, but there's more money in the job of assistant cashier."

"Well, I guess the change won't happen till you see Mr. Bradley. You say you're a relative of his?"

"Yes; my mother was his second cousin."

"It's a fine thing for a clerk to have a pull with his boss."

As Vickers was about to terminate the interview he remembered something.

"How came you to catch on here?" he asked.

"I answered the manager's advertisement in the paper," said Dick.

"How was it you were picked out of the big bunch I saw in the waiting-room?"

"My luck, I suppose. Somebody was sure to be successful, and I happened to be that one."

"I heard you were a friend of Kent's."

"You mean the manager?"

"Who else?"

"No. I never saw him until I was admitted to his room."

"Oh, come now, none of that. He wouldn't put a newcomer over my head and the heads of the other clerks, unless he knew you and wanted to favor you."

"I've told you the truth. I never saw Mr. Kent before this morning."

"That won't go down with me."

"I'm sorry you doubt my word. You can ask him tomorrow."

"Huh!" ejaculated Vickers walking off, leaving Dick to rejoin his chum.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DYNAMITE BOMB.

A week passed and the two college chums showed up so well in the counting-room that Cashier Brown made an enthusiastic report about them to Manager Kent.

That latter gentleman was not particularly surprised, for he had sized the two boys up as comers, and that was the reason he had overlooked their business inexperience.

"You think they will do, eh?" he said.

"I am sure they will, sir," replied the cashier.

"This is pay day down the line."

"Yes, sir."

"You will take Danvers with you, of course. Observe how he conducts himself. Give him to understand that, while nothing has ever happened on these trips of yours, no one can tell when something unpleasant might happen. Then take note if he is alert and watchful during the entire trip. If any effort is ever made to hold up the pay car it will be in the nature of a surprise, and will happen at some lone-some point, of which there are several between the outskirts of the town and the new road."

The cashier nodded and soon after withdrew.

The office closed at three on Saturday.

At that hour all books and papers had been put in the safe, and the clerks, with their pay envelopes in their pockets, were filing out on the sidewalk.

All except Dick.

He was still in the counting-room with the cashier.

Mr. Brown was about to assume the role of paymaster to the workmen employed on the new road ten or twelve miles out of town.

They quit for the week at half-past four.

A high-power automobile stood outside the door ready to take Brown and Dick to the money distribution point.

The cashier drove the car himself.

For reasons which we need not explain he did not care to use a chauffeur on these trips.

Nick hung around the door to see them off, and when they came out, Brown with a grip full of bills and Dick with the flat pay-roll book, he was invited to ride on the back seat, an invitation he accepted with alacrity.

The trip was made in quick time, particularly past the secluded parts of the road.

During the ride the cashier showed Dick, who was familiar with automobiles in a general way, the particular points of the machine they were using.

By the time they reached the ground he was confident he could run the car as well as Mr. Brown.

The auto came to a stop in front of the door of the small portable office of the superintendent on the work.

It was a rough frame structure that could easily be taken apart for transportation and re-erected at another spot.

There was a second building of the same order, but larger, which was known as the tool house.

It was after four o'clock and the superintendent was looking for the arrival of the paymaster.

Each man's pay was in an envelope with his name on it, and when the hands knocked off they formed in line, in alphabetical order, under the direction of a foreman, and were marched up to the automobile.

The paying of the men proceeded rapidly, and without any mistakes, for the cashier knew most of the men by their faces, and was able to call their names with precision as he held out the pay envelope to the right man, and it was Dick's duty to check off each name as it was called.

The men boarded on the outskirts of a large village about a mile away, and when five o'clock came not one of them was in sight.

The watchman was on hand to look after the building, and the superintendent's motor car was waiting to take him and a clerk back to the town.

On the return trip the cashier let Dick run the car, and he proved he could do it as well as anybody.

They reached town at half-past five, and Dick and Nick got out within three blocks of their boarding-house, for Nick had removed to Dick's domicile after the chums secured their jobs.

Vickers in the meanwhile was impatiently awaiting the return of the head of the firm in order to make a squeal because a new employee had been given the position he coveted and had expected to get.

Mr. Bradley was expected back that Saturday evening, but he didn't come until the following Wednesday.

He appeared at the office on Thursday and Vickers got an audience with him.

It did him no good.

He was referred to the manager and Vickers knew better than to make a kick to him.

The result was the clerk blamed everything on Dick, and he told Fox he was going to get square with him.

"What are you going to do?" asked Fox.

"Never mind. I've got a scheme that will pickle him good and proper."

"Why don't you tell me what it is?"

"I'm telling nobody."

"You're getting mighty close all at once."

"Sometimes it pays to be close," said Vickers, in a mysterious way.

"All right. Please yourself," said Fox. "I thought I might help you."

"Maybe you can when the time comes. I'll let you know," said Vickers, and nothing more was said on the subject at that time.

At the end of the second week of the chums in the office Mr. Kent called Dick to his office and complimented him on the progress he had made.

"I expected you would pan out, Danvers," he said, "for I don't often make mistakes in judging the capabilities of a person; but I hardly thought you would come to the front so quick. Your friend seems to be holding his end up, too, and I shall push him ahead. Mr. Brown told me that he couldn't ask for a better assistant than you, and that he feels safer on the men's pay day when he goes down the road."

"I've tried to do all I could for Mr. Brown, for I like him," said Dick. "As to the trip down the road the firm can depend on me to back up the cashier to the last gasp if anybody tries to hold the car up."

The manager nodded approvingly and dismissed him.

On the following Friday night Mr. Brown went to his weekly lodge meeting.

While on his way home around eleven o'clock, as he was passing up the shady and silent block in which he lived he was attacked by four men, whose faces were hidden by handkerchiefs, knocked down and severely hurt by a blow from a slingshot, which cut a bad gash on his head.

He was later discovered by a policeman lying unconscious on the sidewalk, with his pockets turned inside out and his watch and chain gone.

He was taken to the hospital where his wound was stitched up and he was then brought around.

He was put in a ward for the night, and word sent to his house informing his family where he was.

Next morning the surgeon found him in a high fever and he had to remain where he was.

His wife sent word to Manager Kent that it was impossible for him to appear at the office that day.

His absence entailed extra work and new responsibilities on Dick, his assistant.

Dick responded nobly and the manager was much pleased with the way he attended to things.

Unfortunately this was pay day down the road, and Dick would have to go down himself with the money and pay off.

Kent called him into his room and had a talk with him on the subject.

"I guess I can pay the men all right," said Dick. "The superintendent will help me out."

"You'll have to take a clerk with you to look after your duties," said the manager.

"Of course. If you've no objection I'd like to take my friend Norcross with me. We are a good team."

"Take him by all means. I'll have a detective go with you as an additional precaution."

"All right, sir. I don't imagine the car is likely to be held up on this particular trip, but the less chance we take the better."

"My idea exactly," replied the manager.

When Dick returned to his desk he called Nick over.

"Owing to the absence of Mr. Brown I've got to take the money down the road this afternoon to pay off the men. I shall want you to come with me and attend to checking off the pay-roll."

"All right. I'm willing. You don't start until the office closes, do you?"

"No."

"Then it won't be necessary to say anything to Fox."

"No. I asked the manager if I could take you and he said I could."

"Are you ready to go to lunch?"

"I'm not going out to-day. I'll have the office boy fetch me a bite."

"I can give your order at the restaurant and a waiter will bring it here on a tray."

"Maybe that would be better. Come to think, I'm kind of hungry and a sandwich would hardly fill me up. Have the restaurant send me in roast beef with the side dishes, and any kind of pudding they have on the bill, and a cup of coffee."

"I'll attend to it, old man," said Nick.

Fifteen minutes after Nick went out the waiter appeared with Dick's dinner.

He ate it standing at his desk, but had to leave it several times to attend on visitors with bills.

During the afternoon Fox asked Nick, who was now known to be Dick's chum, who was going down the road with Danvers to pay off.

"I'm going with him," replied Nick.

"You are? Then he's going to pay off himself? I thought the manager would go or send me," said Fox, a bit surprised.

"All I know about it is what Danvers told me."

Shortly afterward Fox made a trip to Vickers' desk and told him what he had heard from Norcross.

Vickers grinned wickedly.

"Glad to hear it," he said.

"Why?"

"If Danvers is crooked he'll have the chance to steal the men's pay."

"I guess he's straight enough," said Fox.

"How do you know he is? He's only been here three weeks. He'll have a chance this afternoon that isn't likely to happen again. I hope he takes advantage of it; then maybe I'll get his desk, which I consider mine by right."

"If your chance of getting to be assistant cashier depends on Danvers going wrong I'm afraid you'll wait a long time for it. I'm a pretty good judge of men, and I'd bank on his honesty, though I don't like the fellow," said Fox.

"If you don't like him what do you stick up for him for?" snarled Vickers, who didn't relish Fox's words.

"I thought I'd let you know what kind of a chap I've sized him up to be, as you don't seem to know him."

"Bah! Your opinion is not infallible," sneered Vickers. "He'll take over \$5,000 down the road with him this afternoon. That's something of a temptation. We'll see if he turns up on Monday."

There was a significant ring in his tones that Fox noticed and he wondered what was behind it.

Before he could say anything more to Vickers the office boy came up to him and said that the manager wanted to see him in his room.

Three o'clock came and the office was closed.

Dick, carrying the grip with the laborers' pay, followed by Nick, with the book, came out and crossed to the auto in which sat a chunky, smooth-faced man on the rear seat.

This man was the detective the manager had sent for and to whom Dick had been introduced a short time before.

Vickers, who was hanging around, noticed the presence of the man in the car, and he wondered who he was.

It did not occur to him that the stranger was an officer, still he didn't like to see him there.

One would suppose it was a matter that did not concern him, but it happened that Vickers was specially interested in the afternoon's trip of the auto.

In what way he was interested the reader may learn later.

Dick jumped in the chauffeur's seat, placed the bag of money between his legs, and as Nick plumped down beside him he turned on the power and they were off.

When they reached the road the boys got out their revolvers and placed them where they could lay their hands upon them at a moment's notice.

The detective leaned back with one hand in his sack coat pocket on the butt of his weapon, and his eyes constantly on the alert.

In this way they proceeded for five or six miles, passing several cars going in the opposite direction.

Bowling alone at good speed they reached a lonely stretch of the road.

As there was nothing in sight ahead, Dick put the car at her fastest gait—a forty-mile an hour clip.

They shot along like a flying meteor.

Suddenly Dick saw something rise from the road ahead of them until it came to a rest—a taut line across their path.

A small black object dangled from the center of it.

Dick uttered an ejaculation of warning when he saw that the obstruction was a rope.

What the dangling object in the center was he had no idea.

"A hold up! Look out! Brace yourselves for a shock!" he shouted to Nick and the detective, both of whom saw the obstruction, too.

There was no time to shut off speed in the hope of avoiding contact with the rope.

Indeed, Dick had no intention of shutting off.

At the speed they were making he believed the car would tear its way through the rope, but that would mean a heavy shock to its occupants, who might be pitched out unless they prepared to stand it.

The words were barely out of Dick's mouth when the front part of the car hit the rope.

The impact was far greater than Dick had supposed it would be.

In spite of their grip on the car they were hurled into and through the air like stones from a catapult, turning over and over like circus acrobats, with a blaze of lurid light and the roar of a heavy explosion in their confused ears.

CHAPTER V.

TRACKING THE THIEVES AND THE MONEY.

Dick landed with a crash in a thick mass of bushes.

He was unhurt but badly shaken up.

Nick landed in the middle of the road all of a heap and lay there, stunned.

There was no sign of the detective.

As for the car, the explosion had reduced it to a shapeless wreck.

The rope had been torn to pieces, save the two ends, each attached to a stout tree on either side of the road.

On the side of the highway lay the grip that held the money, turned on its side, but apparently not materially damaged.

Out from the bushes on each side came four hard-looking individuals.

They paused for a moment to survey the wreck they had brought about by means of the rope and a dynamite bomb.

"Look for the money-bag—quick!" cried one, who appeared to be the leader.

"I've got it," replied another, swooping down on the grip.

"Good!" said the other. "Is it busted?"

"No. It's right as a trivet."

"Fine and dandy. The machine has gone to blazes, as we expected it would; now where are the three passengers—the two boys and the man?"

"There's one of them lying in the road yonder."

"Looks as if he had passed in his checks."

"Shall I go and look at him?"

"No. He may be only stunned and in that case will come to of his own accord. It he's dead it's his funeral."

"Here's the man in the ruins of the car," said another.

"I know him. He's a detective. See if he's dead," said the leader.

The officer's face was cut and bloody and his eyes were closed.

"No; his heart beats quite strong," said the man who looked him over.

"Where's the other boy?"

No one could say, for he wasn't in sight.

"Come on, let's make tracks for the lake. We've got the money so the job has been a success. The crowd down the road will have to go without their pay to-day, and the superintendent will have a riot on his hands," said the leader, taking the bag from the hand of the man who had picked it up and pushing his way through the bushes, followed by the other three.

The rascals had only lost a few minutes in the road, but those few minutes, as the sequel will show, counted against them.

During that brief period of time Dick pulled himself together and extricated himself from the bushes into which he had fallen.

"Gosh! This has been a hold-up for fair. That rope did the business better than I thought it would. Mercy! I didn't know where I was after we hit it until I landed in these bushes. I don't know of a luckier place to land in after such a shock. If I'd hit a tree, or the road, I guess that would have been my finish. As far as I can make out I seem to be all

right. I wonder how Nick and the detective have come out. I must see. Then there's the bag of money. My gracious, I mustn't overlook that. I wouldn't dare show my face in the office again if I lost it."

As Dick started to push his way into the road he saw the four men and he noticed that one of them had the money bag in his hand.

"They've got it, the scoundrels!" he breathed, drawing back so they couldn't see him. "How shall I be able to recover it, without a weapon?"

It didn't look as if he stood the ghost of a show of getting it back, as there were four men in the bunch, and it was probable they were armed, too.

He saw them leave the road and take to the bushes that fringed the woods.

He must follow them, for it would never do to let them get away with the money without an effort on his part to prevent them.

He was responsible for the firm's funds, and though he could not be blamed for what had happened so far, he would be expected to do his best toward getting the money away from the rascals who had secured it through their sharp trick.

He called to mind the manager's words—"If your employers' interests were at stake would you stand by your guns?"

That decided Dick.

It was his duty to track the rascals and recover the bag and its contents if it were possible in any way for him to do it, no matter what risk he had to face.

He hoped Nick and the detective had escaped serious injury, but he could not possibly investigate their fate and keep track of the rascals, too.

He started after the four men, keeping well behind, as he was obliged to do, for it was broad daylight.

Had they gone anywhere but through the woods he could hardly have escaped their notice, and that would have defeated his purpose.

The woods ran almost all the way to a large lake which was a mile from the road.

When he reached the edge of the timber he could go no farther without attracting the rascals' attention.

So he stopped and followed them with his eyes, considering what he should do.

They walked straight to the shore, where a small sloop was moored, and boarding it put out and headed for an island in the middle of the lake.

"They've got it on me now," said Dick to himself. "I can't follow them out on the lake. I wonder if they're going to that island?"

Dick did not lose sight of them, and as they did not alter their course he soon became certain that they meant to land on the island.

And that is what they did, running the craft into a small cove, where they made her fast, lowered the sail and landed.

They disappeared among the trees.

After waiting awhile Dick walked down to the shore and locked off at the island, wishing he were able to get there somehow.

Luck befriended him, for he saw a row-boat tied to a tree near the water's edge.

He went over to it, and to his satisfaction saw a pair of oars lying along the seats.

It didn't take him many minutes to untie the mooring line, step in and start for the island.

He pulled hard, hoping that his movements were not observed by the rascals.

He aimed to land at a point as far away from the cove where the boat lay as he could go.

Of course he had his back to the island as he proceeded, and could not tell what was going on there, but as he drew near his destination he cast frequent glances over his shoulder.

He saw nothing moving anywhere, and was encouraged to believe that he would reach the island unobserved by the four men.

His watch told him that it was after four, and he knew that the superintendent of construction on the road job was looking for the coming of the pay-car about that time.

"He'll be disappointed, and the men will put up a big kick because their wages are not forthcoming, so that it is safe to predict that there will be a strenuous time around the temporary office," thought Dick.

In a few minutes the boat's bow grounded on the beach and Dick sprang ashore.

He pulled the boat along until he found a tree near enough to the water to tie it to, then he walked into the woods that covered the island nearly all over.

He went forward with caution, for he did not want to come upon the four men unawares.

At length he came to a small open place in which stood a one-story shack.

"I'll bet those fellows are there," he said to himself.

Keeping within the shadow of the trees he walked around the building.

It had a door in front, a window on each side, and the rear was a blank wall.

One of the windows was partly open at the bottom.

Dick took advantage of the fact that there was no window in the back wall to advance in the direction.

Then he made his way in a crouching attitude to the open window.

He heard the sounds of men's voices inside.

Also the occasional thump of a heavy hand upon a table.

As he listened he soon became convinced that the men were playing cards.

He judged that they had cut the money bag open, divided its contents and were gambling with their spoils.

He would have liked to look in at the open window in order to get a sight of the men to make certain they were the same fellows he had seen in the road with the money bag in their possession, but it was too risky in broad daylight.

The money being now presumably divided it was harder to recover than ever.

What was he going to do about it?

It was certainly a big problem.

He thought the situation rapidly over as he stood there, but could think of no scheme that would help him even a little bit.

At length it occurred to him that by sailing the sloop back to the shore of the lake and taking the rowboat with him, he could maroon the men on the island.

Then if he could beat up enough men to take to the island and capture the rascals he would be able to get back the firm's money.

It seemed to be about the only thing he could do that promised results.

"Here, now, none of that, Steve Bunker. You had that ace up your sleeve," came an angry voice through the open window, at that moment.

"You're a liar, Bill Dooling," returned the other, with an aspersion.

"I say you did," roared Dooling. "I saw you pick it out. I won't stand for no trick like that. Take your hand off that money. It's mine."

The sound of a blow followed.

That was the prelude to an awful scrimmage between the two, in the midst of which the table went over with a crash.

Dick ventured to take a peep through the window.

A regular mix-up was going on inside between two of the men while the other two were trying to separate them.

The four chairs were overturned and a bunch of money and a deck of cards were scattered on the floor.

Dick left the scene at the height of the hubbub and made his way to the sloop.

CHAPTER VI.

TURNING THE TABLES ON THE ENEMY.

When he reached the cove he stepped aboard the sloop and found the cabin door half open.

Looking in he saw four bunks that had recently been slept in, for they were disarranged and untidy.

There was a door in the forward part of the cabin which led into a space in the bows.

Dick went and opened the door to see what was beyond and found it was a sort of kitchen, as it was equipped with a small stove, set in a shallow box full of sand, and a number of cooking utensils.

Since he had no time to waste he did not pursue his investigations further, but returned to the cockpit.

He intended to hoist the sail first, then untie the mooring rope and spring on board, leaving the light wind to carry the sloop free of the cove.

His intentions were not carried out, for, to his dismay, he heard the voices of the rascals close by.

They had left the shack about the time he reached the little vessel, and the few minutes he had wasted over a survey of

the cabin and cook-room gave them time to get so near that it was now impossible for him to leave the sloop without being seen.

"My gracious!" he ejaculated. "What shall I do now?"

On the spur of the moment he retreated to the cabin, but as he realized this was no place for him, he pushed on into the cook-room and closed the door.

He heard the men come on board, and in a moment or two the mainsail and jib were hoisted and the sloop glided out on the lake.

"I'm in it up to my neck now," thought Dick, "and liable to discovery at any moment. Well, I don't care. I'm standing by my guns. I may not be able to recover the firm's money, but I'm going to try for it just the same. I don't know how the rascals will handle me when they smoke me out, but if I'm to judge by the method they used against the pay-car I fear they won't treat me gently."

The men remained in the cockpit and Dick hoped they would stay there.

After a time he ventured to open the door a little way and peered in.

The cabin door being open, he could see the chap at the helm, and the legs of another man near by.

He wondered where the men were going with the sloop.

He saw the island slipping behind astern, and from the direction it lay he judged the craft was bound for the northern end of the lake.

After awhile two of the men entered the cabin and started a game of cards, and they were presently joined by a third. Having plenty of money they played for good-sized stakes.

For an hour matters remained unchanged, and then the sloop entered the narrow stream which fed the lake.

The sun was setting by that time, and the card game, which had been conducted with varying luck to the participants, broke up and the three men went outside.

As darkness fell over the scene Dick looked for one of the men to enter the cook-room to prepare supper, for he had noticed the presence of various supplies in cans and boxes, including eggs, bacon, bread, and such.

What he looked for shortly came to pass.

One of the rascals entered the cabin, passed through and opened the door communicating with the cook-room.

The place was so dark that he did not see the boy in there, and as he had not lighted the cabin lamp it was equally dark out there.

Dick possessed himself of the stove lifter to defend himself with.

While the man was reaching for the matches the boy determined to strike the first blow, as that would give him the advantage.

The moment the little blaze flared up he struck out at the man's head.

The blow caught the rascal on the side of the temple and he fell to the floor, stunned.

The match fell from his fingers, expired as it hit the stove and left the little compartment as dark as it was at first.

Dick was ready to strike a second blow, but when he saw the man did not move he knew he had been put out of business for the time being.

He looked through the door to see if the noise had attracted the attention of the others, but it had not.

He shut the door, pulled a match out of his vest pocket, struck it and looked at the unconscious scoundrel.

"What shall I do with him?" he thought. "He is liable to come to his senses at any moment."

He saw he had given the fellow a nasty blow, for the point of the stove-lifter had cut a jagged wound, from which the blood was flowing freely.

Seeing a small lamp suspended in a bracket, Dick took it down and lighted the wick, which he turned low.

The next thing he did was to search the rascal's pockets and he found a big roll of bills in his sack coat pocket, and two more wads in each of his pants' pockets.

He dropped the money behind the coal box.

He gagged the fellow with a dirty cloth, and tied his hands behind him with a piece of brown cord, after taking a revolver from his hip pocket.

This done, he shoved the man in front of the door, which he left open, after extinguishing the lamp.

Half an hour passed and then one of the others looked into the cabin and saw no sign of a light in the cook-room, where the still senseless chap had gone to cook supper.

Evidently he thought that was strange, particularly as he heard no sounds denoting activity in the culinary line.

"What in thunder is the matter with Glenn—has he gone to sleep?" he remarked.

"Eh? What are you talking about?" asked Steven Bunker.

"I'm talking about Glenn."

"What about him?"

"He seems to be mighty quiet forward, and there isn't a spark of light coming from the cook-room."

"He's got the door closed," said Bill Dooling, who was steering.

"S'pose he has, the light ought to shine through the cracks, and I don't see any."

"Go there and see what's the matter with him, then."

This conversation was distinctly audible to Dick in the cook-room.

The man in question, whose name was Myers, entered the cabin and strode forward.

He reached out his hand toward the door and found it was open.

That was a big surprise to him, for he saw all was dark within the cook-room, and that showed him something was wrong with Glenn.

"What in thunder is the matter with you, Glenn?" he demanded, taking a step forward.

His foot came in contact with Glenn's body, which obstructed the doorway, and losing his balance he pitched forward and struck his head on the edge of the stove.

That was the trap Dick had spread for the first one that came there, and it succeeded.

Half dazed by the shock, Myers uttered an imprecation, mingled with an ejaculation of pain, as he slipped on his knees.

Then Dick struck him with the butt of the revolver and laid him out.

Dragging him into the room, the boy found a revolver in his pocket, too, and took possession of it.

Searching his other pockets, he found several rolls of money, which he added to the other bunch behind the coal-bay.

He tied the man's hands behind his back, gagged him and shoved him to one side.

The ease with which he had disposed of two of the enemy greatly encouraged the plucky lad.

There were only two more, and one of them was occupied with the helm.

The noise made by Myers was heard by the others, but they suspected nothing wrong, and nothing more happened for ten minutes, when it occurred to Bunker to go and see how things were getting on in the cook-room.

Dick expected that one of the two in the cock-pit would come when the last man failed to go back and report how Glenn was making out with the supper.

Bunker, seeing everything dark forward, could not understand it, except that the cook-room door was closed tight; but even at that there should have been a gleam or two of light filtering through the cracks, and there should be sounds of business in the galley.

He bumped against the cabin table in the darkness, and with a muttered imprecation he stopped, fumbled for a match in his pocket and striking a light, took down the lamp and lit it.

Dick had not expected this move on his part and it upset his plans somewhat.

With the glow in the cabin Bunker saw that the door of the cook-room was open. He also saw the form of Glenn streached across the entrance.

To say that he was staggered would but mildly express his feelings.

"What in thunder is up here?" he growled.

As Glenn's face was not visible he did not know whether the motionless figure was he or Myers.

Whichever one it was, he could not see the other.

He stared at the door, like a person confronted by a startling situation.

He could see that there was not a spark of fire in the stove, and not a sign of supper underway.

"Myers, where are you?" he called out.

Myers, being dead to the world like Glenn, didn't hear the hail.

If he had heard it he couldn't have answered it, owing to the rag across his mouth.

Bunker got no reply, of course, and was more mystified than ever.

He strode to the door, looked down at Glenn and recognized his clothes.

"It's Glenn," he said. "What's happened to him, and where in creation is Myers?"

Dick saw he must act quickly if he would maintain his advantage.

Accordingly he stepped forward and struck Bunker down with the butt of the revolver.

The rascal collapsed under the blow and fell over Glenn.

Dick hauled him into the cook-room and found a still bigger amount of money in his pockets, which he put with the rest.

The boy added a third revolver to his collection, after which he tied Bunker's hands, but did not gag him.

Dick now felt certain of the ultimate result, for only one man remained to be overcome—the fellow at the helm.

This was Bill Dooling, and as he had a clear view of the cabin, he had seen Bunker fall.

The table being in the way, he had not seen anything further, though.

"What's the matter, Steve?" he called out.

He might have saved his breath, for he got no answer.

The strange silence that reigned forward where his three companions had gone greatly puzzled him.

"Steve! Why don't you answer my hail?" he shouted again.

Not a sign or a sound from even one of his friends came back to him.

"There's something blamed queer going on in the cooking-room," he muttered. "There's three of them gone in there, and you'd think they were dead ones for all the attention they pay to me. I'm getting hungry. Supper ought to be ready by this time, but hanged if I can see a thing doing in the cook-room.

When several minutes passed and matters remained as they were he grew angry, as well as impatient.

Grabbing a rope, he tied the tiller and started for the cook-room, with the air of a person who meant business.

Dick stepped out and confronted him with leveled revolver.

"Throw up your hands," he said, "or I'll shoot."

Dooling was taken completely by surprise and started back.

"Who the mischief are you?" he asked.

"No matter. Up with your hands and be quick about it."

Dooling reached for his gun.

Dick fired at his right arm and the rascal gave a yell of pain, for the ball had broken his forearm.

His language was something fierce, as he glared at the boy, who had the drop on him.

"Turn around, you scoundrel, or I'll put a ball through your head next," cried the resolute boy, who, however, had no intention of carrying out his threat.

Between the pain of his arm, and the hopelessness of resistance, Dooling gave in and faced about.

Dick stepped forward and took his gun away from him.

Holding the cold muzzle of his weapon pressed against the back of the ruffian's head, and threatening him with death if he stirred, Dick went through his pockets and got the rest of the stolen money.

Bidding the rascal lie down on the nearest bunk, he tied his ankles together and left him.

Thus, he had turned the tables completely on the scoundrels, made them all prisoners and recovered the whole of the stolen money.

CHAPTER VII.

DICK TAKES CHARGE OF THE SLOOP.

Dick went out into the cockpit and found the sloop steering herself.

The wind was light and she was not making much headway. The landscape all around was dark and lonesome.

There was not a light in sight.

Dick hadn't the remotest idea where he was or where he was going.

At any rate he wasn't going any farther in that direction.

He untied the rope that held the tiller and put the sloop about.

He had no great knowledge of boat sailing, but he had no trouble making the change, though he executed it awkwardly, and nearly got a crack from the boom when it swung across the cockpit.

With the boom out to starboard, and the sloop headed back for the lake some miles distant, he tied the tiller again and re-entered the cabin.

Dooling lay groaning in the bunk from the pain of his wound.

Dick wasted no sympathy on him.

Going into the cook-room, he collected the money he had thrown behind the coal box and brought it out to the cabin table, where he proceeded to sort out the bills of different denominations and lay them on separate piles.

Then he counted the whole and found the sum correct, with about ten dollars over, which belonged to the rascals.

This overplus he put in his vest pocket to turn over to the police with his prisoners.

The firm's money he wrapped up in a newspaper and tied it up with cord.

"I never thought when the boat left the island that I'd come out ahead in this way," he said to himself. "I've captured the whole bunch single handed and got the money back. I don't think the firm will find any fault with the way I've acted. I couldn't avoid the hold-up. Nobody could have escaped it. I don't see how the car could have made the terrific noise it did on striking the rope. The gasoline tank must have caught fire and blown up. Yet even at that, I don't see how it could have made such a terrific noise unless my ears deceived me."

Carrying the package of money out into the cockpit, Dick released the tiller and took charge of it.

The current being now with the sloop, she went on somewhat faster.

Dick was feeling decidedly hungry by that time.

After steering awhile he returned to the cook-room and began foraging for a meal.

A pie and part of a loaf of bread were the only articles available offhand.

He took both out to the cockpit and ate as much as he wanted.

"Now I feel better," he said, smacking his lips.

His thoughts recurred to his chum and the detective, particularly the former, and in the light of his own narrow escape from the car he began to have some grave doubts about the fate of his companions.

"I hope they escaped with slight bruises," he said to himself. "I should feel very sorry if Nick were badly hurt."

The river narrowed at a point he was approaching, but in the gloom Dick did not notice it.

Suddenly the boat ran on a part of the left bank and stopped, with a jolt that threw the boy forward.

"I wonder where I've got to?" he asked himself.

He left the tiller and went forward to investigate.

There was so little light that he could not make out the shore, although he was practically on it.

He looked around the sloop for something to push off with, but there was nothing he could use for that purpose.

"This is kind of rough," he said.

He struck a match and looked at his watch.

It was after nine.

"There doesn't appear to be a house anywhere around, for I don't see a light. The only lights I've seen since I took charge of this boat were a long way off, and only a couple at that, one on either side of this river. I had no idea the country up this way was so thinly settled. It's too bad I've run into this dilemma, for I don't see how I can get out of it before morning, maybe not then. To-morrow is Sunday and the few people up this way won't be stirring around. I feel as helpless at this moment as a fish out of water."

Still his spirits did not flag, for he felt he had done a big thing in capturing the four scoundrels who had destroyed the automobile and got away with the firm's money, which he now had in his possession.

His adventure was sure to be printed in the Sterling papers, and he did not doubt but he would be complimented by the manager and the firm.

He returned to the cockpit and sat there.

The mainsail and jib flapped softly in the night wind.

Figuring on his position, he judged he was still some distance from the lake.

Suddenly he heard a curious sound at a distance ahead.

He listened intently and as it grew clearer, showing that it was approaching, he made it out to be the noise of some kind of engine.

"Sounds to me like a motor boat," he said. "It's coming this way. I'll get the people in it to help me off."

Looking eagerly down the dark stream, he saw a light come in sight, as though rounding a turn in the river.

The light proved to be of the search variety, and it was being flashed on each bank alternately.

Chug, chug, chug, chug! came on the boat, which now Dick was sure was a naphtha launch.

It was making pretty good speed and the light rapidly drew near the spot where the sloop was stuck.

The flashing of the light gave Dick his first idea of the width of the stream he had been following, and the general character of the banks, which were low and bordered with reeds and cattails.

In a few minutes the light flashed upon the dark sides of the sloop and her weather-beaten sails.

After that the light remained stationary, bringing the boat out into relief against the dark background.

"They've spotted the sloop," thought the boy; "now I'll get out of my predicament, for that launch ought to pull this boat clear without any great trouble."

The launch was headed straight for the stranded boat, and it didn't take her many minutes to come up.

The persons aboard of her easily saw Dick seated in the stern, but they did not know she was aground, though they might have had some suspicion of the fact, noticing that her sails were hoisted.

Finally the chugging sound ceased and the launch came on under her momentum only.

In this way she ran up close to the sloop.

"Hello!" shouted Dick. "Want to do me a favor?"

"Who are you?" came back the reply.

"My name is Dick Danvers. I'm aground here, and want to be helped off."

"Danvers, eh?" came back the voice. "Are you the assistant cashier for Bradley, Nichols & Co.?"

"Yes."

"How in thunder did you get up here, and what are you doing in that sloop?"

"What do you want to know that for?" returned Dick, as the launch ran alongside.

He saw there were four men in the boat.

Two of these, who were in the bow, stepped aboard the sloop.

"Because we're out hunting for you and the rascals who blew up the pay-car this afternoon. They got away with the money, and until this moment we supposed they had got away with you, too."

"Are you detectives from Sterling?"

"We are."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"You haven't answered my questions."

"Show me your badge so I can make sure of your identity and I'll answer all the questions you chose to put to me."

The officer displayed it and Dick was satisfied.

"Who's that groaning in the cabin?" said the detective. "You're not alone. Benson, step inside and see what's going on there."

"You'll find the men in there who blew up the car," said Dick.

"What's that?" said the officer, staring at him.

"I've captured the four of them single handed and recovered the money from them," said Dick, in a tone of pardonable exultation.

"Is this true, young man?" asked the astonished detective.

"You'll find it so. The fellow you hear groaning I was obliged to shoot, for he started to draw his gun on me. The others I got easily by a little sharp work on my part. I put each of them to sleep with a tap on the head. You'll find those three bound and gagged in the cook-room. They were still insensible the last time I saw them."

"Upon my word you're a corker, young fellow. I don't see how you did the trick."

"It was a question of do it or get done myself," said Dick. "I used my brains against the four rascals and their weapons, and I won out. Here's one of their revolvers. The other three are under that seat with the package of money."

"The fact that you are so far from the scene of the crime indicates that you were in the power of the rascals for a time."

"The indication is wrong. I was at no time in their power. I followed them to the island in the lake, and from the island they carried me unawares up this river as far as I let them go. When I've told you all the facts you'll understand the case."

"I'll hear you in a few minutes. Well, Benson?" to his assistant who reappeared at the cabin door.

Benson reported that he had found a wounded man in one of the bunks with his ankles, tied, and had discovered three more men, bound and gagged in the galley on the floor, one of them unconscious, with a gash over his temple.

That corroborated Dick's statement.

The boy was then invited to tell his story, which he did.

"You've behaved like a major," said the chief detective, "and I guess your firm will appreciate your efforts."

He then ordered the sloop's sails lowered and a towing line attached to her bows from the stern of the launch.

Ten minutes later the party was on the way down the river, the detectives remaining on the sloop with Dick.

CHAPTER VIII.

VICKERS IN A FUNK.

It took an hour to reach the lake, and twenty minutes more to proceed to a small wharf, from which the detective's party had embarked to scout the lake and, if need be, the river, for a sloop which had been seen making for the island with four men on board soon after the outrage in the road.

The launch belonged to the owner of the farm bordering on the lake, and he had loaned it to the detectives, sending a man with them to run it.

Dick learned that Nick, and the detective who accompanied them in the car, had been discovered by the occupants of an automobile going toward town.

Nick was coming to his senses at the time, but was severely injured.

He told the few facts about the hold-up that he knew.

A hunt was made for the bag of money, which was not found, but the detective was taken out of the ruins of the car unconscious.

Nick insisted on a search for his friend Dick, and the occupants of the car spent some time looking for the assistant cashier, but failed to find any trace of him.

He, like the bag of money and the scoundrels responsible for the crime, had disappeared.

Nick wanted to continue the search himself, but was in no condition to undertake it.

He and the detective were carried to the hospital in town.

The party in the auto then went to the station house and notified the police about the outrage.

An officer was sent to the hospital to interview Nick.

The boy was better but very shaky when he arrived there.

The hospital authorities, at Nick's earnest request, had notified Manager Kent by 'phone at his house, and that gentleman arrived about the same time as the officer did.

Nick told his story, and he insisted that his friend Dick must have been carried off by the rascals concerned in the outrage, who had clearly got the money.

The manager was in a great sweat over the affair.

It was then after six o'clock, and he judged that there had been high jinks among the workmen down the road, owing to the failure of their pay to reach them.

It was too late now to duplicate the money and take it down, for the bank had been closed hours since.

He expected to see the road superintendent come tearing into town for an explanation, and he rushed down to the office to wait there for his coming.

On the way he stopped at the station house and arranged for several detectives to go to the scene of the hold-up, and start from there to trail the robbers to their hiding-place, wherever that might be.

He offered a reward of \$1,000 for the recovery of the stolen money.

Such were the facts that Dick learned from the chief detective on their way to the private wharf.

The detectives, four in number, had come out in a fast car.

Two of the officers had gone off in the direction opposite to the lake, and where they were now only themselves knew.

The auto was at the farm of the man who owned the launch.

Into it were bundled the four rascals, handcuffed, with Dick on the seat with one of the officers who acted as the chauffeur, with the package of money at his feet.

The ride back to town was made in record time, as the road was clear, and the party duly landed at the station house.

Manager Kent was notified that the robbers had been caught and the money recovered, and he hastened to the station house to learn the particulars from Dick.

The young assistant cashier showed none of the bad effects of the hold-up, as did Nick and the detective who had gone in the pay-car.

Mr. Kent was surprised at his chipper appearance after such strenuous experience, and congratulated him on getting off so well.

He was still more surprised when Dick told him his story, in the presence of the chief of police.

"By George!" it is quite clear that you saved the money, Danvers. It will be a big feather in your cap with the firm. You are a boy of nerve and action, and no one could have done better than you. I have offered a reward of \$1,000 for

the recovery of that money, and I shall ask the firm to pay it over to you," said Kent.

"No, sir, and consequently I'm not entitled to any reward. Were I not connected with the firm then I might, with propriety, claim the reward, but as it is you can see yourself that I am out of it," said Dick.

The manager nodded, but said he was entitled to some special acknowledgment in consideration of his zeal.

Dick insisted to the contrary and so the matter rested.

It was after midnight when he reached his boarding-house and found Nick absent.

The two daily papers, next morning, printed the hold-up sensation in full, and it was in every one's mouth around breakfast time.

After his morning meal, Dick hurried to the hospital and was admitted to see his chum, whose head was in bandages, though he was feeling pretty good.

"Well, old man, you look as if you'd been through a battle," said Dick.

"I consider myself lucky to be alive. The detective is in a pretty bad way. How in creation did you come off so easily? You haven't a scratch."

"Because I landed in the bushes, I suppose. Where did you land?"

"In the middle of the road, thirty feet or so from the wreck of the car."

"It's a wonder you escaped at all. How about the detective?"

"He was picked out of the wreck. He had three ribs, an arm and a leg broken."

"Mercy, he got it bad. I thought it was the gasoline tank caused the explosion, but the police said it must have been made by a dynamite bomb, judging from the looks of what is left of the car. If that is so the three of us are lucky to be alive now."

"I should say so. I've been reading the story in the paper, and I'm bound to say you did a great business recovering the money and capturing the four scoundrels without help or even a weapon other than what you picked up aboard the sloop."

"There was a lot of luck in it. One boy can't do up four men, armed with guns, except through a fortunate streak. Things just came my way."

"That's all right, but without nerve and pluck you couldn't have carried the thing through," said Nick. "Well, I guess I'll go along with you. I don't see any reason why I should remain longer here. The surgeon has rebandaged my head, and it won't have to be touched again till to-morrow morning. I can come back then and have it attended to."

The house surgeon allowed Nick to go, and the boys went away together.

There were two persons in Sterling who read the story of the hold-up without enthusiasm.

One of them was Fox, who didn't like Dick Danvers, nor Nick Norcross, for that matter, and was not pleased at the idea of the former distinguishing himself.

The other was Hen Vickers, who was both surprised and alarmed.

And he had reason to be, since he was the real instigator of the outrage, not only on the pay-car, but on Cashier Brown, whom he had assaulted in order to prevent him from going out with the money that Saturday.

If the affair had gone through with full success, Vickers was to get a fifth share of the plunder.

As the case now stood he would get nothing, and was in danger of being given away by his captured associates.

He was shaking in his shoes when Fox, who suspected he had some connection with the hold-up, called on him about nine in the morning.

"Hello, Vickers, why are you looking so white about the gills?" asked Fox.

"Oh, I don't feel well this morning. Stayed up too late last night and drank too much hot stuff," replied Vickers, with a sickly grin.

"That so? Have you read the paper yet?"

"Yes."

"What do you think about the hold-up? It came off at last, and it has given the new assistant cashier a chance to cover himself with glory. There never was much chance of you getting that position, but now you haven't the ghost of a look-in."

Vickers made no reply.

"What do you think of Danvers, now?"

"I hate him worse than ever," hissed Vickers, savagely.

"I guess that fact won't worry him much," chuckled Fox.
"Maybe it will yet."

"Not much chance. You can see by the newspaper story what kind of a chap he is. He isn't safe to monkey with. You wouldn't tackle him, at any rate."

"How do you know I wouldn't?"

"Because you haven't got the sand, dear boy."

"You don't know me."

"If I don't it would rather surprise me. Now, look here, what do you know about that hold-up?"

"What do you mean?" asked Vickers, with an uneasy look in his eyes.

"You knew it was going to be pulled off, didn't you?"

"I knew it? Say, what are you trying to spring on me?"

"You told me a week or so ago that you had a scheme up your sleeve that you were going to work on Danvers to get square with him. Yesterday we had a short talk at your desk and your remarks were rather significant. It's my opinion that you engineered that scheme, and that you're sick this morning because it failed."

"You're dreaming," blustered Vickers.

"Perhaps I am, but if it's the truth I wouldn't care to be in your shoes. The four men who tried to turn the trick are in jail, and if they have a partner on the outside they might find it to their interest to blow the gaff."

"What is all that to me?" asked Vickers, in a shaky voice.

"I don't know that it's anything to you. I just mentioned it, that's all."

"You said it as if you were making a crack at me. I want you to understand I had nothing to do with the matter. Do you take me for a fool?"

"Candidly speaking, my dear fellow, I do," replied Fox, with refreshing frankness. "You've done lots of petty things a sensible chap wouldn't be guilty of, and that is why you're unpopular at the office, and why Kent has his hooks into you. Take it from me, chappie, you're not going to last unless you have a mighty good pull with Bradley."

"Don't worry about me not lasting. I'll stay as long as the office does," snarled Vickers.

"Well, are you going to stick here all day or are you coming down the street with me?" said Fox.

Before Vickers could reply there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," he said.

The landlady opened the door.

"Here's a note that was left for you, Mr. Vickers," she said.

The young man walked over and took it.

He carried it to the window, tore it open and read it.

"To HEN VICKERS:—The job was pulled off in good shape, but the morning paper shows just how it ended in a failure, landing yours truly and pals in jail. We look to you to hire a lawyer to get us out of this scrape, for we ain't got a red ourselves to pay one to take the case. See that you attend to it or something might happen to you. If we have to do time for the hold-up somebody else will have to face the music, too. When we're brought before the magistrate we'll waive examination, and that will give you time to get busy. If you fail to come to time, you know what you can expect. Enough said.

STEVE BUNKER."

Vicker's hands trembled as he read the note.

What was he going to do?

He had no money to hire a lawyer for the men.

The only thing he could do was to pack up and skip the town before the men squealed on him.

That was the last thing he wanted to do, but there seemed to be no help for it.

He shoved the note in his pocket and turning to Fox, said:

"I feel too rocky to go out this morning. I'll meet you this evening at Gilligan's."

"Oh, all right," said Fox, carelessly. "I'll be there around eight."

He opened the door and walked out, satisfied that Vickers knew more about the hold-up than he would admit.

CHAPTER IX.

VICKERS SHOWS THE BRAND OF CHAP HE IS.

As soon as he was alone Vickers started to pack his trunk. Suddenly a thought struck him and he stopped.

He remembered that when Cashier Brown failed to appear at the office on the morning previous that Manager Kent had opened the safe for Danvers.

Later on the manager had handed him a slip of paper with

the combination so he could open it himself on Monday morning, as Mr. Brown was not expected to be in shape to resume work for several days.

Vickers knew that there was over \$1,000 in the safe at that moment.

If he could find the slip with the combination he would be able to open the safe and take whatever money was in it.

He would then be able to hire a lawyer to defend the four men, and that would keep them from squealing on him.

He reasoned that Danvers had the slip in his desk drawer.

A chisel would force open the drawer, and if the paper was there the rest was easy.

It would be easy to get into the office through a back window from the yard, for the catch of one of the windows was broken and there was nothing to prevent the lower sash from being raised from the outside, and Sunday morning, when there were few people stirring in the business district, was just the time to turn the trick.

He decided to attempt it.

Of course there was some risk to the affair, but he regarded it as small.

The landlady's husband was a carpenter and he could easily get a stout chisel from him.

The scheme looked so good to him that he lost no time in carrying it out.

He got the chisel without difficulty and started for the office.

Reaching the neighborhood he sneaked up an alley, climbed over the fence into the yard, and going to the window with the broken catch he lifted the sash and clambered into the office.

He thought he heard a sound and stopped to listen.

All was silent, and reassured he went to Dick's desk and began operations on the locked drawer.

In a few minutes the lock snapped with a sharp report and he pulled it open.

Pushing some papers aside his heart gave a bound of satisfaction when he spied the slip with the combination in a corner.

Holding it in his fingers he went to the same.

He turned the handle of the combination to a certain number and heard the tumblers drop.

Then he reversed the motion till the pointer on the disk indicated another number.

He repeated the operation for the third time, seized the other handle and with a smart turn of his wrist pulled the door of the safe open.

Flushed with success he came face to face with the inner door, which he had forgotten about, and which could only be opened with its key.

He stared blankly at it.

"The key—where shall I find it? I must have it," he said aloud.

He turned around and found himself face to face with Dick Danvers.

"What is the meaning of this, Vickers?" demanded the assistant cashier.

"You here?" hissed the clerk, starting back.

"I have a right to be here, as I came on a special errand for the manager; but you—by what right are you here, at that safe? You have broken open the drawer of my desk and taken out the combination, and but for my coming you would probably have found the key to the inner door and used it as you have used the combination. What's your object? Is it robbery?"

"Blame you, what right have you to catechise me? Why did you come to this office? But for you I would now be assistant cashier. But for you I wouldn't be in the fix I am now in. You have blocked me at every turn, and I hate you—I hate you, do you understand?" hissed Vickers, with bloodshot eyes.

"I am sorry you entertain such feelings toward me, for I have done nothing to deserve them," said Dick, calmly.

"You lie! You have done everything. And now you think you have me in your power and are gloating at the thought. You intend to expose me to the manager, who is looking for some excuse to discharge me. And he will expose me to Bradley, and that will complete my ruin. Before you shall triumph thus over me I will kill you!"

Vickers rushed suddenly at Dick and struck him a terrible blow in the face, which sent him reeling to the floor.

Then he seized a heavy ruler and struck Dick on the head with it, stunning him.

He was about to follow it up with other blows which, in the intensity of his rage, would have killed Dick had he the

nine lives of a cat, when he heard a noise at the street door. He stopped and looked fearfully toward the counting-room door.

He heard the sounds again.

Springing on his feet he rushed to the door, took the key from the outside, where Dick had left it when he let himself in, and locked the door on the inside.

Then, with feverish energy he seized the unconscious Danvers and dragged him into the drafting-room, dropped him on the floor and closed the door.

Crouching like a wild beast beside it he strained his ears for a repetition of the sounds at the outer door.

He heard the sounds of footsteps in the hall outside and then the knob of the counting-room door was rattled.

There was a pause and the steps retreated toward the street door.

Vickers waited in fear and trembling some moments, but heard nothing more.

Slowly, and with the cat-like tread of a thief in the night, he glided toward the windows overlooking the street, the blinds of which were pulled down.

Pulling one blind an inch aside he looked out.

The street appeared to be deserted.

Then he glanced sideways toward the stoop of the building where the entrance was.

There he saw Nick Norcross, half sitting and half leaning against the iron hand rail.

"He came with Danvers and is waiting for him to come out. What shall I do?" muttered Vickers. "Well, I don't have to go out that way. I can escape by the window that I entered through. I must hurry matters. I must find the key to the inner door of the safe, clean out the money drawer and leave town at once before Danvers comes to his senses and puts the police on my track."

He went to the drawer in Dick's desk, tossed out the papers in feverish haste and finally found the coveted key under the bank-book.

It was but the work of a moment then for him to open the inner steel door.

Books and papers confronted him, and several drawers, as well as the square steel compartment called the subtreasury, in which the money was kept.

The key to this he found in one of the drawers and quickly opened it.

A large bunch of bills lay before his eager eyes.

He rolled them up in two parts and thrust them into his hip pockets.

In the drawers where he found the key was about \$15 in silver change.

He dumped this into another pocket.

Having secured all he came for, he locked the inner steel door and tossed the key under the safe, after which he closed and locked the outer door.

Then he sneaked to the front window again and looked out.

Nick had left the stoop and was leaning against the railing on the sidewalk.

Vickers grinned fiendishly at him through the slit in the blind.

"You'll wait there some time, I guess," he gritted, malevolently.

He crossed the room, opened the door and looked into the drafting-room.

Dick lay there still insensible.

"Ugh, how I hate you!" hissed Vickers, glaring down at him. "You're the cause of all my troubles. I wish you were dead."

Then the thought struck him that he might have killed the assistant cashier.

He shuddered at the idea of being a murderer, and shivered at the thought of the possible consequence to himself in that case.

"No one saw me strike him down. No one can accuse me," he muttered, looking at the motionless lad. "I'll leave the window open to give the idea that some rascal made his way in that way. If Danvers is found dead it will look as if the man who came in by the window killed him. But suppose he is not dead? That when found he has life enough in him to accuse me of the crime? Then I'll be hunted down by the police and put in jail. I must prevent that. I must finish him and make sure that the truth is never found out."

Vickers started back to get the ruler to complete his murderous work.

When he returned with it to the door his nerve failed him and he dropped it.

Intense as was his hate against Danvers he couldn't strike him as he lay there helpless at his mercy.

As he hesitated a sudden idea struck him.

Across the hall from the office was a small store where oil, benzine and a brand of paint was sold.

"I'll get in there and set the place on fire, and with such inflammable stuff at hand the building will go up in no time. Danvers will go up with it and then I'll be safe. But suppose that Norcross should come in and catch me while I'm about it, then I'd be in a worse fix than ever. I know what I'll do, I'll lock the front door."

He went to the office door and listened.

All was silent in the hall.

He unlocked the door and stepped out.

Reaching the hall door he found that the key was not in the door, as he expected.

He did not dare open the door to see if it was on the outside.

He peered through the keyhole and the lock looked clear.

He wondered what he could find to brace the door.

He went back to the counting-room and looked out of the front window.

Nick was not outside any longer.

Looking around, Vickers saw him standing on the opposite corner.

He was glad he was out of the way, so he couldn't hear the noise he would have to make to break into the paint shop.

Getting the chisel he used it like a jimmy and broke the lock of the door, which was only an ordinary brand.

Before getting down to work he took another look at the corner and saw that Nick was still there.

He was talking to the policeman on that beat, who had come along.

Vickers saw a pile of cotton waste.

He took the cover off the big metal can that held at least fifty gallons of benzine.

He soaked bunch after bunch of the waste in it and threw it on the floor.

Another idea struck him, but before executing it he looked out of the window again, and saw Nick still in conversation with the officer.

He carried an armful of the cotton waste into the counting-room and placed it on a chair, which he shoved under the desk nearest the drafting-room door.

Returning to the paint shop, he filled a quart measure with benzine and carried it into the office and soaked the cotton with it.

He brought a second armful of the waste and put it into a closet, the door of which he left open, and soaked it with another quart of benzine.

Then he took another look out of the window.

There was no change on the corner.

"I'll give them a surprise in a few minutes," he chuckled.

He splashed a dozen gallons of benzine on the floor and walls of the paint shop, and he carried a lot of it into the counting-room and distributed it where he thought it would do the most good.

"Nothing like making a thorough job of the thing while one is about it," he muttered.

Everything was now ready for the blaze to be started and he took a last look from the window.

Nick and the cop were still talking away.

"That's right. Chin away, you chumps. You'll soon be busy enough when the fire takes hold," he grinned.

Striking a match he touched off the pile of benzine-soaked waste, which he shoved close to the big can of the fluid.

There would sure be an explosion presently.

Then he rushed into the counting-room and ignited the stuff on the chair and in the closet.

"Now to make my escape," he said, turning toward the window.

At that moment the door of the drafting-room opened and Dick appeared in the opening, a bit groggy, though not so much so but he comprehended the situation.

CHAPTER X.

VICKERS DISAPPEARS.

"Great Scott, man, what are you doing?" cried Dick, seizing Vickers by the arm.

The rascal turned with a cry of dismay.

"You again!" he hissed. "Will you never cease to cross me?"

"Cross you, you scoundrel! You are firing the office. What

has prompted you to commit such an infernal deed? Come now, help me put it out."

"Blame you! Take that!"

He struck with his fist at Dick, but the boy easily warded off the blow and grappled with him.

At that moment a tremendous explosion shook the building, blowing the windows, front and rear, out of the paint shop, which was instantly converted into a sea of flame.

The burning fluid ran out into the hall like a blazing river. Black, stifling smoke poured out of the two windows.

The explosion startled Nick and the policeman, and they looked around.

It needed but a glance to show that the paint shop was on fire, and blazing furiously.

The officer started on the run for the next corner, where there was a fire box, to turn in the alarm, while Nick, knowing that Dick was in the burning building, rushed across the street, expecting to meet him coming out.

But he didn't come out and Nick rushed in to find him, though he was taking chances by doing so.

In the meanwhile a desperate struggle was going on between Dick and Vickers.

They swayed to and fro near the door of the drafting-room.

Dick's foot caught on the sill and he lost his balance, pulling Vickers with him.

The rascal's coat caught in the handle of the door and pulled it to with a bang.

The two hung in the air for the fraction of a minute, then Vickers' coat became detached.

With a shock that shook the room Dick and his enemy fell to the floor, the latter on top.

"Help! Help!" shouted the boy, realizing his disadvantage.

At that moment the door flew open, admitting Nick and a cloud of smoke.

"Holy smoke! What's all this?" cried Nick, when he saw the struggling pair.

"Help! Help!" cried Dick, who found it impossible to shake off the desperate grip of Vickers, that rascal being determined to choke him to death if he could.

Nick did not recognize Vickers at first, but he knew that the under one was his chum and that was enough for him.

He seized Vickers by the collar and pulled him backward.

Dick rose from the floor with him, for the rascal did not let go his hold.

Then Nick recognized the clerk.

"Vickers!" he cried, in astonishment. "You here. Let go of Danvers. What are you two scrapping about with the building on fire. Let go, both of you."

Dick at this point broke Vickers' hold on his throat, and that enabled Nick to pull the young scoundrel off his chum.

With a howl of rage Vickers smashed Nick in the face, sending him staggering backward, then he dashed through the door into the blazing counting-room that was full of stifling black smoke, threw up the window and blindly crawled out of it, and dropped into the yard.

He lost no time in getting over the fence into the alley and making off.

Already the fire-alarm bell was sending its deep tones out upon the Sunday morning air, and a crowd of people were rushing in the direction of the smoke that indicated where the fire was.

Several fire engines were on their way to the scene, and their clang and rush added to the general excitement.

Dick and Nick realized that they were in a bad pickle, for the smoke was of such a stifling character that they could hardly see or breathe.

"Come on, Dick. We can't escape by the front way. Follow me through the manager's room to the exit on the side street," said Nick, opening the door beyond and dashing through it.

Dick followed him and shut the door to bar out the smoke.

They passed on into the ante-room beyond, which faced on the side street.

The door was locked, but the key was in it, and it was a simple matter to turn it and shoot the two bolts.

Nick did this and opened the door.

Then they rushed out, and found a score of people already congregated at the corner, with many others running that way from all directions.

Dick looked something like a wreck after his struggle with Vickers, and Nick, owing to his bandaged head, didn't look a whole lot better.

When they reached the corner, the flames were in full pos-

session of the paint shop and the floor above, and could be seen through the main entrance and through the blinds of the counting-room.

"I'm afraid nothing will be saved in our place," said Dick, "or in the office above. You can stay and look on if you want to, but I've got to telephone the news to Mr. Kent. This is the second piece of hard luck the firm has been up against inside of twenty-four hours."

Dick started for the next corner, where he knew there was a public telephone, and was presently in communication with the manager.

They only exchanged a few words, because the moment Mr. Kent learned the office was on fire he wanted to get to the scene without delay.

Dick returned to the neighborhood of the fire, but he couldn't find Nick.

Most of the engines were on hand by that time and they were soon at work.

They had a job before them, and they finally got the flames under control, but not before the building was gutted from roof to cellar.

The ell, where Mr. Kent's room was, partially escaped the general ruin, and the firemen kept the blaze from encroaching on the adjacent buildings.

The investigation by the fire chief, aided by the story of the policeman on that beat, showed that the fire had started with the explosion in the paint shop.

There was a strong smell of benzine on the side occupied by the contracting firm, but this was not considered extraordinary under the circumstances, and until Dick told his story later to Manager Kent, who was amazed at the figuring of Vickers in the affair, no suspicions prevailed that the fire was of incendiary origin.

"You say that when you entered the counting-room you found Vickers standing before the safe, the outer door of which was open?" said Mr. Kent.

"Yes, sir," said Dick.

"How did he get the combination?"

"Broke open my drawer and took it. He must have seen you give it to me yesterday."

"I had a poor opinion of Vickers, but I never thought him a rascal. He was trying to get at the money, of course, but I suppose he didn't succeed. The safe is now in the cellar, and I noticed that the outer door was shut, as it ought to be. You closed it after catching him in the act."

"No, sir, I did not. I had no chance to do it," and Dick told of the knock-out he got from Vickers.

What happened until he recovered his senses he was ignorant of, he said, but when he returned to the counting-room he found it on fire and Vickers spreading the blaze.

He said the explosion in the paint shop followed, and narrated what happened between him and Vickers up to the fortunate appearance of his chum, when Vickers got away.

Kent immediately took Dick to the police headquarters, where he told his story over again, with the result that detectives were sent out to find and arrest Vickers.

They failed to find him at his lodgings, but they discovered evidences there which showed that the clerk had made a hasty departure.

The police in the neighboring towns and cities were then requested to look out for him.

Of course there was no work for the office force after the fire until new quarters had been hired and fitted up, and this took a little while.

On Monday morning, however, as soon as the bank opened, Manager Kent drew the money necessary to pay the road hands off, and sent Dick with it in a hired car, with Nick as his body guard.

The stolen money was not available because the police retained it as evidence against the four men who had committed the outrage.

The road superintendent had learned all about the hold-up on Saturday afternoon, and sent an explanation to the laborers with the assurance that they would get their money Monday morning.

Nick had recovered the pay-roll book from the wreck of the car, and so when he and Dick reached the ground they were ready to pay off.

The men were at work and the superintendent did not care to have the men called off simply to get their pay, as it only wanted about twenty minutes of the noon hour.

Dick and Nick dined with the superintendent at the hotel in the village and then returned to town.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXPRESS PACKAGE.

Dick found a letter waiting for him.

Much to his surprise it was from his uncle.

That gentleman had read about his nephew's strenuous experience in the pay car, and the chase and capture of the four rascals, and seeing that the boy had secured a good position without help, had come to the conclusion that he amounted to something after all, notwithstanding his college escapade, and was now disposed to resume friendly relations with him.

"You're lucky," said Nick. "I wish my aunt would capitulate the same way."

"She probably will if you give her time," replied his chum.

"What are we going to do with ourselves for the next few days?"

"Give it up. I may call on my uncle and smoke the pipe of peace with him."

"I would since he seems disposed to let bygones be bygones."

The boys ascertained that their services would not be required for that week, so Dick packed his grip and started for his uncle's home.

His uncle, whose name was Foster, lived in a fine house on the suburbs of Buffalo, and Dick received a cordial welcome.

He told Mr. Foster all about his business experience with the firm of Bradley, Nichols & Co., and his uncle nodded his head approvingly.

"I guess you've sowed all of your wild oats, nephew," said Mr. Foster.

"I guess I have, for my head is now full of business ideas," said Dick.

"I'm glad to hear it. You'll find me willing to help you now."

"Thanks, uncle, but I guess I can get along without any help now. A chap never knows what he can do till he's put to it. You really did me a favor by making me hoe my own way. When I found I had to depend on my own resources I got down to business, and the result is quite satisfactory to me. Still, I would prefer to tackle some enterprise of my own to working for other people. A man never can make much money till he goes into something worth while on his own account."

"There's time enough for you to think of that, nephew. You're young yet. Get all the experience you can before you figure on branching out into your own business," said his uncle.

On the following day Dick learned from the papers that the cargo contractors of Buffalo had formed a coalition and made a demand for increased rates for the carrying of coal in particular across the lake to Canadian ports.

This demand was being resisted by the shippers, and as a result no new contracts were being made.

Outside of those who had current contracts still to complete the cargo contracting business was at a complete standstill.

Dick made a tour of the wharves to investigate the situation, which interested him.

At one dock he got into conversation with a man who had been in the business for many years, and he told the boy that the contractors were trying to work the squeeze game on the shippers.

"The season for shipping next winter's coal has just commenced, and the contractors think they have the shippers under their thumbs. To a certain extent they have, for they control lake traffic. But wait a bit till some smart chap comes along with a bit of money, and stands in with the shippers, then the contractors will alter their tune," said the man.

"Is there money in the business at the old rates?" asked Dick, interestedly.

"There's a fortune in it for those who can get freight right along."

"Let me know all the facts about the business."

"Are you a reporter?"

"No. I'm connected with a contracting firm in Starling."

"Come here to investigate the situation, I suppose? Well, I'll put you wise to the facts from the ground floor up."

This he did, and for the next half hour Dick was busy making notes and asking questions.

Then he called on the superintendent of a big coal shipping firm and had a talk with him.

Dick, with consummate nerve, represented himself as the managing partner of the firm of Danvers & Norcross, which

was thinking of embarking in the cargo contracting business at Buffalo, and he wanted to know what deal he could make with the shipping house for the exclusive privilege of carrying all their coal across the lake.

The superintendent said the house was in the market at the old rates.

If a responsible contractor came along and offered to accept those rates he would get the contract for the season.

As an inducement to such an enterprising individual or firm all wharf charges at both ends would be waived during the run of the contract.

Dick found out all he could, and was satisfied that there was a fine opening for somebody.

The scheme appealed to him, but unfortunately he had no money.

Nevertheless he followed the matter up and found a large coal-carrying sloop for sale or charter.

The man who owned her had died two months previous, and the widow, as executrix of his will, wanted to sell or rent the vessel.

Owing to the tie-up in the trade she was willing to make easy terms.

Dick found out what her terms were, and promised to consider the offer.

He went back to his uncle's house, thought the matter out in all its bearings, and came to the conclusion that if he could raise \$1,000 he would resign from Bradley, Nichols & Co., get Nick to do the same, and go into the business with his chum.

He believed it was a good thing, if properly worked, and that under existing conditions he and Nick ought to make a bunch of money.

At lunch he outlined his plans to his uncle and asked him for the loan of \$1,000.

"You certainly have lots of nerve to think of embarking in a business you have had no experience in. You are not lacking in assurance, either, in asking me to back you up in the business."

"I don't want you to back me, only loan me a thousand dollars."

"That is equivalent to backing you, for if you should fail, how would you be able to repay the loan?"

"Don't you worry about me failing, Uncle Foster. When I take hold of a thing I put it through for all it's worth," said Dick.

"Well, I will not deny your energy, and I guess you are ambitious; but I think you are trying to undertake something beyond your abilities."

"Nonsense, uncle. It's a good thing. It's a good idea for a fellow to grip hold of an opportunity when it comes his way."

"Certainly, if it's something he can hold on to."

"What's to prevent me and my chum holding on to this?"

"Your inexperience."

"We were as inexperienced as two kids when the manager of the contracting firm gave us the chance to show what we could do. We made good right off the reel."

"But that was a different proposition. You were taking no financial risk."

"And working for small wages."

"You have prospects of an increase."

"I know it, but I'm ambitious to do better now that I see the chance that may not happen again. A new firm of cargo contractors, especially a young one, would stand no chance here if it wasn't for the tie-up. Here is the chance for Danvers & Norcross to get their hooks in."

"Danvers & Norcross ought to have an initial capital at least to begin with. To start into what I consider a risky venture on borrowed money is the height of foolishness."

"Oh, all right, uncle. If you block me I can't do anything. I'll have to let the matter slide and resume work with Bradley, Nichols & Co. next Monday," said Dick, greatly disappointed.

Nothing more was said about the project, and Dick went out, feeling that a good thing was slipping away from him and his chum as well.

That afternoon when he got back he received a letter from Nick.

That lad was in high feather.

He had ventured to call on his aunt, had been kindly received and finally taken back into her good graces when she found he was doing well.

Next afternoon Dick was walking along a side business street, where every other store in the block appeared to be devoted to the wholesale jewelry and silver ware business,

when an Adams express vehicle, drawn by a single horse, and carrying two employees pretty well caged in, drew up before the entrance that led to the upper floors of one of the buildings.

The driver remained in the wagon while the other young man, opening a narrow iron gate behind the driver's seat, sprang out with a book and a moderate-sized package strongly done up and sealed in several places with red wax in which was impressed "the company's stamp."

The man ran into the entrance and proceeded upstairs.

Two smooth-faced chaps who were standing at the window of the jewelry shop adjoining the entrance held a brief exchange of words and then followed him.

Somehow their actions struck Dick as being suspicious, and he stopped and looked up the stairs.

Suddenly he heard a scuffle and a muffled cry for help.

Satisfied something was wrong, he started upstairs, and reached the landing in time to see the expressman in the grasp of the two men.

At that moment one of the fellows got the sealed package away from the expressman and started up the next flight two steps at a bound.

The other held on to the expressman and appeared to be choking him.

Dick jumped to his rescue.

The lone rascal dropped the now unconscious expressman and turned to defend himself.

The racket attracted the attention of a clerk from the loft on that floor and he wanted to know what was up.

"Robbery," cried Dick. "Help me capture this fellow."

The rascal didn't wait to be caught, but tearing himself free from Dick's grip ran down the flight and disappeared into the street.

Dick did not attempt to follow him, but ran up the next flight to try and find the man who had got away with the package.

There was no sign of him on the landing, and Dick kept on to the top floor.

He was not there, but a short ladder to a scuttle suggested his line of retreat.

The scuttle was closed, but Dick saw it was not caught on the under side, so he was satisfied that the thief had gone on the roof.

He threw open the trap and looked around.

The roofs of the adjoining buildings were all on a level, and it was an easy matter for any one to run along them in either direction to the corner, and continue at a right angle as well.

Dick's inspection at first developed no one in sight up there.

There were numerous wide chimneys, behind any one of which a man could conceal himself.

Dick continued to look, first one way and then the other, without result.

All at once he saw something flutter half way to the corner and made out that it was the end of a sack coat.

"I'll bet that chap is hiding behind that chimney. If he is I'll have him out of there mighty soon," said the boy.

He stepped up on the roof, left the trap open and started for the chimney in question.

The moment he did so a figure came from behind the chimney and started on the run across the roof.

"I thought you were there, you rascal," muttered the boy, getting a gait on. "You were keeping a sharp lookout and saw me come up. If I can get my hands on you I'll make you give up that express package."

The fellow with the package proved pretty spry, however, and Dick was not able to overtake him at first.

After a run half way around the square the rascal started to try the scuttles along the roofs, and that gave Dick a chance to close in on him.

Finally he tripped over a low fire wall, and before he could get up Dick was on him.

They had it hot and heavy for a few minutes, but Dick was an athlete and more than a match for the thief.

During the struggle the package got away from the fellow. Dick released him and pounced on it.

"Now you can go," said the boy. "This goes back to the express company."

"I'll remember you, young feller, and will fix you for this," said the thief with a scowl.

Dick paid no attention to him, but started for the building where the open scuttle was.

The thief went in the opposite direction on a run.

Dick did not suspect his object, but it soon developed.

He beat the boy to the scuttle by half a block, disappeared down it and closed it after him.

When Dick reached it he found that it was fast.

The thief had marooned him on the roofs.

The only thing Dick could do was to hunt for another scuttle that was not fastened.

It took him some time to find one, and then he discovered that it opened into an empty loft and that he would have to drop ten feet to the floor.

This he did, but unfortunately he lighted on a loose board which flew up and struck him such a heavy blow on the forehead that he fell back unconscious.

CHAPTER XII.

STRIKING A GOOD THING.

When Dick regained his senses he was in darkness.

He had been senseless several hours during which night had fallen.

He had a big lump on his forehead from the effects of the blow from the board.

"My gracious! How's this? Everything dark around. Where am I at?"

He struck a match and looked around.

He saw he was in the vacant loft into which he had dropped.

"I must have been unconscious some time," he said.

His watch told him it was after eight.

"I must get out of this place; but can I at this hour?" he thought.

He looked around and saw a door by the aid of matchlight.

It was closed by a spring-lock, but as the catch was on the inside he had no trouble in getting out.

He marched down the silent and dirty stairs to the ground floor and the street door, and then he found, as he had feared, that he was locked in.

The street outside was silent, and though he waited for some one to come along, intending to attract their attention by pounding on the door, no one showed up.

Then he tried to find a rear way out, but failed, though he went into the cellar.

The building appeared to be vacant, though he could not tell for certain, as the doors on each floor were locked.

Finally Dick had to give up and put in the night there.

About seven he made his presence known to a passer-by, but half an hour passed before he was liberated from the building by the porter next door, who wanted to know how he came to be in that vacant building.

Dick told him his story.

"The robbery of the express package is in all the papers," said the porter. "The express company has offered a reward of \$2,500 for the capture of the thieves and the recovery of the package, which contains a large amount of unset diamonds."

"They'll get the package back as soon as I can reach the office, but the police will have to catch the thieves," said Dick.

The porter gave him directions how to find the express office, and he started for the place at once.

On the way he stopped at a restaurant, for he was very hungry, not having had his dinner the evening before, and ate a big breakfast.

When he reached the express office, and explained his errand, he was taken right into the manager's office.

To that official he handed over the package intact, and told his story.

He was complimented for his pluck and energy, and was told that the reward would be paid to him irrespective of the capture of the crooks.

He explained how he happened to be in Buffalo visiting his uncle, and told the manager that with the reward money he intended embarking with his chum in the cargo contracting business as a competitor of the combine that now controlled the situation on the water front.

After a long interview he left with the company's check in his pocket, and before going to his uncle's house he sent a telegram to Nick telling him to come on at once, as he had struck a good thing for both of them.

Mr. Foster had been wondering where his nephew had gone, but his wonder increased when Dick turned up with his story about the express package and the check.

The afternoon newspapers had the story, of course, and the detectives were somewhat disappointed, for they had expected to win the reward themselves.

Nick arrived on the following day, and Dick explained to him his plans.

Norcross was enthusiastic over the scheme, and they signed articles of partnership without delay, rented a small room for an office down near the water front, and chartered the sloop that Dick had his eye on.

Dick then interviewed the manager of the Atlas Coal Company, the superintendent of which he had talked to a few days before, and made a contract to carry 100,000 tons across the lake to Wellington, in Canada, on the old terms, with free docking facilities at the company's wharf in that place.

On the Buffalo side all Dick had to do was to have his sloop brought to the company's chute and loaded without charge.

He promised to have the sloop on hand next morning ready to take coal aboard.

He was able to do this, for he knew where he could secure the former skipper and small crew of the sloop at once.

While he was attending to these matters Nick was buying supplies for the passage across, and having the vessel overhauled to see that everything was in ship-shape for the trip.

When night fell the captain and crew were aboard with their traps and signed for an indefinite time at their regular wages.

The coal company had promised to send a tug at daylight to fetch the Siren, which was the sloop's name, to the coal chute.

The tug was promptly on hand and the sloop was hauled to the company's place, where no time was lost in beginning loading her.

Nick attended to the furnishing of the little office with a cheap rug, a roll-top desk, and sundry other necessary articles.

He also got a painter to furnish two tin signs—one for the street doorway and the other for the office door.

These signs read: "Danvers & Norcross, Cargo Contractors."

Word was carried to the offices of the different members of the Cargo Contractors Combine that the Siren sloop was loading coal at the Atlas Company's chute.

As the Siren was known to have been in the market for sale or hire, it was supposed that the Atlas Company had either purchased or chartered her to use on their own account, and nothing was thought of the matter.

Agents of the Combine, however, were sent out to block any further move on the shippers' part to get any more vessels to help them out.

It is true that a number of independent sloop owners were arranging to follow Dick's lead, but the Combine had little fear that their interference would amount to much.

Their craft were all very small and could not carry much of a load.

The Siren, however, was as large as any sloop on the lake, and the members of the Combine kicked themselves for not thinking to secure her first.

It was arranged between the chums that Dick was to cross the lake with the sloop and attend to business at the other side while Nick remained in charge of the Buffalo end.

He and Dick sent their resignations by mail to Bradley, Nichols & Co., informing the contracting firm that they had gone into business together in Buffalo.

They didn't say what kind of business, leaving the firm to guess.

Dick told Nick to look around and see if the firm could secure a second sloop at as reasonable a figure as the Siren had been obtained.

That was about all Nick would have to do, except order some printing, until Dick got back.

The Siren was all ready to start late that afternoon, and as time was money, Dick bade his chum and partner good-by and went aboard.

The sloop cast off from the chute, was towed outside, and then set all her sail.

The wind and weather favoring her, she made a quick trip across to Wellington, where her coming was expected, as the manager in charge had been advised by telegraph by the Atlas Company.

She made the dock under her own sail and was made fast.

Dick had to pay the unloading gang, as that was part of the agreement.

The men were furnished by the manager at Wellington.

While she was discharging her coal, Dick went ashore to see the town and learn facts connected with his business.

He had another object, and that was to try and secure a return cargo.

Owing to the tie-up on the American side there was a lack of craft in Wellington to take lumber and shingles across to Buffalo, so Dick had no difficulty in securing a full load.

He could have forced a high rate on this, but he offered to

make a contract for steady hauling at the old rates, and the Wellington Lumber Company closed with him.

This action on his part ensured a return load while the coal contract lasted, which was likely to be some time.

That made handsome profits for the chums' firm certain at the outset of the enterprise.

When the Siren returned to Buffalo and hauled into a certain wharf to unload the lumber, the Atlas Coal Company put up a kick over a day's time lost at each end.

Fortunately when the contract between Danvers & Norcross and the coal company was drawn, the latter had neglected to specify the exclusive use of the sloop, though they took it for granted that was understood.

Dick pointed out that in contracting to carry coal across at the old rates the firm could not afford to let the sloop come back empty if a load could be got at once on the other side.

As the Atlas Coal Company was dependent on the new firm at that moment, the matter in dispute was not pressed, on Dick promising to use the utmost dispatch in every way.

The situation was still worse at Buffalo, for the Combine had refused to make any compromise, believing it would win out.

The coal shippers had combined themselves and agreed to help one another out.

There being nothing in Dick's contract that compelled him to take coal from shutes other than the Atlas Company, he was approached on the subject.

He said the firm had no objection to making a supplemental contract covering the ground if the coal combine would individually agree to give him the preference in hauling at the old rate over all competitors.

Dick's object was to insure steady business for the firm in case the cargo contractors backed down. He came to a satisfactory agreement with the shippers, and then tried to run out the new firm.

Dick's proposition was agreed to in writing, and the supplementary contract was signed.

"That makes success certain, old man," said Dick to Nick. "Buy a small, second-hand safe and put the contracts in it. We need it anyway to hold our account books, ready cash and other things. When our profits begin to mount up we'll rent a safe deposit box."

"I'll do it," said Nick. "We have certainly struck a good thing."

CHAPTER XIII.

DANVERS & NORCROSS HAVE A FIGHT ON THEIR HANDS.

That afternoon when the sloop was waiting for the tug to come alongside to tow her away from the coal chute and start her on her way to Wellington again, a young man stepped aboard and asked for the captain.

The skipper who was on deck asked him what he wanted.

"Will you take me across the lake for a reasonable sum?" said the young man.

"Why don't you go by rail? You can go in quarter of the time, if it's Wellington you want to reach. Besides, we don't take passengers, anyway," said the captain.

The doctor has ordered me to take a water trip for my health."

"Then why not take the steamer for Cleveland or Toledo?"

"I don't like steamers."

"I don't admire your taste when you pick out a dirty coal sloop."

"Oh, any kind of a sailing vessel suits me."

"Does it, now? Well, step over to Simmons Wharf. Maybe the captain of the schooner Maria will accommodate you. We have no accommodations for you."

The young man did not seem anxious to go over to the schooner Maria, which, not being in the coal-carrying business, presented a cleaner appearance.

Just then the tug came up and the captain left him to attend to business.

While the attention of all hands was engaged the young man glided down into the cabin, and after remaining there a few minutes he came out and met Dick at the door.

"Hello, who are you?" said Dick.

"Me? Oh, my name is Smith," replied the young chap.

"What are you doing about this sloop?"

"Just brought a bundle to the captain from his wife."

"Oh, all right," said Dick, accepting his reply as the truth.

At that juncture the captain came up.

"You here yet?" he said to the young fellow. "Get ashore. Stir yourself or you'll have to swim for it, for we're casting off."

The visitor took a flying leap and hurried up the narrow wharf. "What do you suppose that chap wanted?" said the skipper to Dick.

"He brought a package to you from your wife, so he told me," said Dick. "I met him coming from the cabin."

"Coming out of the cabin? Why, confound his nerve. I wonder what took him there? He asked me to take him across the lake. He said his doctor had advised him to take a water trip for his health. I'd like to know what took him into the cabin. I believe he went there to steal something. Your coming probably spoiled his little game. I wish I'd caught him coming out; he'd have heard from me."

"Well, never mind him. Are we ready to start?"

"We are. I was only waiting for you to come aboard."

"I'm aboard now, so you cast off," said Dick, entering the cabin.

He sat down at the table and got out a bundle of papers to look them over.

While he was thus engaged the sloop got under way.

He was still employed consulting the papers and figuring away on a waste sheet when the tug cast off and the sloop proceeded under her own sail.

Shortly afterward the captain came into the cabin.

He walked across to a locker, but paused as he was about to open it.

"Did you bring a clock aboard, Mr. Danvers?"

"No. Why do you ask that question?"

"Because I hear the ticking of a clock."

"So do I. I supposed you'd brought one aboard."

"No. If that isn't a clock I can't imagine what it can be."

"It sounds over in that corner near the floor."

The captain went over to the spot and, looking down, discovered a small object covered with a piece of newspaper.

He picked it up and tore off some of the paper.

It wasn't a clock, but a tin box.

The ticking came from the interior of it.

"Elamed if I can make out what it is," said the skipper. "There must be one of thcse small cheap clocks inside of it. I wonder who brought it aboard. I guess I'll open it and see. Nothing but a clock could make that ticking."

Dick stared at the tin case which the captain was about to open.

Across his brain there flashed a suspicion that this thing might be a dynamite bomb, with a clockwork attachment for setting it off at a certain time.

He snatched it out of the captain's hand, ran out of the cabin and threw it overboard.

The tin box struck a floating piece of wood and exploded.

"It was a bomb," said Dick to the startled captain.

"A bomb!" ejaculated the skipper.

"You heard it explode, didn't you?"

"A deaf man might have heard that. How in thunder did it get in the cabin?"

"It strikes me that visitor we had brought it."

"Why should he or any one else bring it aboard?"

"To blow the sloop up."

"For what reason?"

"This is the only vessel carrying any coal to speak of across the lake on account of the tie-up. The cargo contractors combine might have employed that young man to bring it aboard in order to put us out of business."

The captain nearly had a fit.

"What an infernal piece of business! Every man aboard here might have been killed or drowned if it had gone off in the cabin."

"Quite likely. It isn't the first bomb I've run against."

Dick told the skipper about the pay car episode.

"I must say you've a good nerve," said the captain. "Why, if that thing had gone off in your hands there wouldn't have been enough of you left to sweep up."

"Well, don't say anything about it to the men, who are evidently wondering what caused the explosion in the water, or we might not be able to get them to stay with us after this trip."

"I won't say a word."

When he went on deck a little later one of the crew spoke to him about the explosion, but he professed the densest ignorance concerning it.

The run was made in good time, the coal discharged, a load of shingles taken on at the wharf of the Wellington Lumber Company, and the sloop returned to Buffalo.

Dick reported to Nick, and also to the manager of the Atlas Coal Company the attempt made to blow the sloop and cargo up, and told his suspicions concerning the authors of the out-

The police were notified, a description of the young man furnished them, and detectives were quietly put on the scent.

When the shingles were unloaded the sloop was towed around to the coal chute to get her third load.

The tie-up situation was unchanged, both sides standing by their guns.

The coal shippers had succeeded in securing another sloop to carry their black diamonds across to the Canadian shore, and were running the vessels themselves.

To that extent they had scored on the cargo contractors, but even at that, and the assistance they got from the miscellaneous small craft, they were only able to move a small part of the coal that usually went across.

The firm of Danvers & Norcross were doing first rate.

Nick told his chum that he had been waited on by a committee from the cargo contractors with a proposal that the new firm should join hands with them, and help bring the shippers to terms.

Nick said he had refused to consider any proposal without first submitting it to his partner, who was the manager, so the committee said they would call on Dick when he got back from across the lake.

A watch was kept for the return of the Siren, and when she was docked to discharge the shingles the cargo contractors' committee called at the firm's office again and saw Dick.

After their spokesman had had his say Dick proceeded to have his.

He said that whatever his opinion might be on the justice of the cargo contractors' part, it was impossible for the firm to side with them, as he and his partner were bound by a contract to carry coal at the old rates, and they would have to carry out their engagement.

The committee tried to get him to agree to break the contract, assuring him that the shippers were on the point of giving in, and that then his firm would come in for its share of the higher freight rates.

Dick, however, positively refused to do what the committee wanted.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

The Siren sailed on her third trip without interference from the cargo contractors combine.

Whatever plans they had for putting the sloop and the young opposition firm out of business they judged it prudent not to put it in force just then at any rate.

The good thing that the chums had fallen into went along all right for the next two weeks, and their profits began to accumulate in their safe deposit box, since being under age they were unable to have a regular business account in any of the banks.

The fight between the two factions had grown more bitter.

Both sides were losing considerable money, but the shippers, perhaps were better able to stand the loss.

At any rate, they were doing something through the two big sloops and a few small craft that the cargo contractors had not yet frightened off.

The shippers had scoured the lakes for other contractors, but after making terms with them, the new people were intimidated or bought off, and the contracts were not carried out.

The shipping combine had come to admire the stalwart front put up by the young firm which had first come to their aid, and which was sticking to them through thick and thin.

A resolution was passed complimenting the two boys and assuring them again that when a settlement was effected with the cargo contractors they would be taken care of independent of the signed contract to that effect.

One afternoon the Siren returned late to Buffalo with a load of lumber and shingles.

In order to facilitate the coal shipments, Danvers & Norcross were employing a night force to handle their lumber business on both sides of the lake.

This reduced their profits somewhat, for they had to pay half as much again for labor, but the firm believed it would pay them in the long run to prove their willingness to aid coal shippers in every way they could.

The shippers when they saw this duly appreciated the efforts and told them they would lose nothing by it.

Indeed, on vote it was resolved to reimburse Danvers & Norcross for the extra outlay, though they were in no way bound to do it.

The young firm was so informed, and directed to send in the

amount to the temporary treasurer and it would be paid without question.

The boys, however, declined to accept this concession.

They said business was business, and all they wanted was the face of their contract in view of the fact that they were losing a certain amount of time to the coal people by reason of taking the return cargos.

On the afternoon in question, Dick, as soon as he landed, rushed off to the place where the men he hired congregated.

Some of the men were there, but they refused to go to work.

It didn't take Dick long to find out from his partner that the cargo contractors had at last succeeded in buying the men off by paying them the wages they would receive for their labor.

This was a serious state of affairs to the young firm.

If they couldn't get laborers to unload their shingles and lumber in Buffalo, they would have to quit taking the return cargo, and they would be out their profits.

Dick called on the manager of the Atlas Coal Co. and asked him if he could help the firm out.

As it was necessary to get the sloop around to the chute as soon as possible, the manager said he would draft some of his men for the purpose.

The men objected to working that night on top of their day's toil, with the next day's labor in prospect, even if it was but half a day.

Besides, they said they were not accustomed to handling lumber, and didn't want to do it.

Their protest was reasonable and was finally allowed.

Then Dick and Nick took the bull by the horns, went to a cheap lodging-house and made an offer to the loungers there.

They succeeded in getting half a dozen to go with them, and they marched their workers down to the wharf and put them at work with the members of the crew.

The skipper and the two partners took off their coats and sailed in, too.

Dick had taken the precaution to telephone for police protection to ward off possible trouble.

It was lucky he did so, for word was soon passed among the cargo men that the Siren was being unloaded by a miscellaneous gang, and they sent emissaries and a bunch of toughs to frighten them off.

Dick and Nick saw the outsiders coming and scented trouble.

They posted themselves at the head of the wharf with revolvers and proceeded to bar admission to the enemy.

This worked for a while, and then a rush was started to overthrow the two boys and throw them into the harbor.

The foremost two were shot down by the boys, who were wound up for business, but that only turned the assault into a dangerous riot, and threats of vengeance were hurled at Dick and Nick as the ruffians tried to get at them on top of the lumber whether they had retreated and kept up a fire on the enemy, wounding several more.

The toughs hurled bricks and bottles at the boys, and they would have been slaughtered but for the arrival of the police contingent.

The skipper and crew, in the meanwhile, were holding off the rascals from the sloop, which they threatened to burn, and the greatest excitement prevailed.

The police, however, routed the enemy in a summary way with their clubs and then formed a line across the head of the wharf which prevented a renewal of the attack.

The work of unloading then went on.

Next morning the tug hauled the Siren around to the chute of one of the coal shippers, and she began taking in her cargo.

The boys spent most of the day in bed, but Dick was on hand to go away with the sloop as usual.

"I leave you the job of getting a force of men to unload on my return," said Dick to his partner. "Better be careful in making your selections, and work as quietly as you can, for the opposition will certainly try to do us."

The cargo contractors combine were now hot after the young firm, but the members of it were afraid to proceed to extremes.

They knew that if they put the sloop out of business they would be looked on as the persons who engineered the job.

It wasn't that they cared for that, but they did care for the consequences in case their tools were caught and forced to confess.

So they looked around for somebody who could be thoroughly depended on.

They found such a person in Hen Vickers, who had drifted to Buffalo after losing all of his ill-gotten money.

He was down on his luck and desperate enough to undertake anything, particularly when he learned it was directed

against Danvers & Norcross, whose presence in Buffalo in a business of their own was a great surprise to him.

When the sloop came back with a load of shingles, Nick had a gang of men ready to unload.

Among them was a bearded man, whose natural complexion had been bronzed by the costumer's art and made to look older than it really was.

This man was Vickers, and he secured work with Danvers & Norcross without being recognized by Nick.

Work proceeded under Nick's supervision, Dick having gone to his uncle's.

At midnight work was stopped for an hour, and Nick provided a supper for the gang.

The bearded man ate with the others and then he disappeared.

His absence was not noted, or at least no one thought anything of it.

Nick in the meanwhile had gone into the hold to see how much stuff remained to be discharged.

While he was there he saw the bearded man sneak down in a suspicious way; being alive to danger from an unexpected quarter at all times, he watched the man.

Vickers looked cautiously around, and not seeing Nick, and believing the coast was clear, he took a bundle from under his coat, opened it and took out a lot of highly inflammable cotton waste which had been specially prepared beforehand.

He shoved this in between two piles of shingles and struck a match.

The next instant he received a stunning blow on the head from Nick's fist that stretched him out as flat as a pancake.

His beard became disarranged, and Nick, seeing it was false, snatched it off and saw who the rascal was.

"Henry Vickers!" he cried.

"Yes," hissed the scoundrel, jumping up and drawing a small bulldog revolver. "But you shall not live to expose me."

He shoved the gun against Nick's left breast and pulled the trigger.

But a kind Providence was watching over the boy at that moment.

The cartridge proved to be defective, and did not explode when the hammer hit the cap.

It was the only thing that saved Nick's life.

"Hard luck!" gritted Vickers, trying to recock the weapon. But his chance was gone.

Nick knocked him down and pounded him into unconsciousness, and then he was handed over to the police.

He was sent to Sterling to stand trial for his crimes there, and the attempted crime aboard the sloop was held back to be brought later, insuring him a long term in State prison.

The rest of the night passed without event.

That was the last attempt made against Danvers & Norcross by the cargo contractors combine.

Before the sloop returned from Wellington on her next trip, the contractors threw up their hands and agreed to accept the old rate.

That ended the tie-up, and the water front of Buffalo resumed its wonted activity.

An effort was made to cut out the young firm by the old ones, but the shippers vetoed it.

Further, Danvers & Norcross got the tip to secure another sloop, and they would be given all the hauling they could attend to.

They didn't lose any time in attending to the matter, and within a few days added the Calliope sloop to their business, and their profits increased in proportion.

If we had the space we could show how the colleg chums grew rich in their business venture, but as we have not, we must leave the reader to follow their successful career in his imagination.

Many years have elapsed since the events we have narrated, and Dick and Nick are now on the top rung of the cargo contracting business of Buffalo.

Dick became heir to his uncle's wealth and Nick to his aunt's, and the addition of this money to their resources helped them ahead, but still their whole success started from the first piece of good luck in striking a good thing.

Next week's issue will contain "AMONG THE 'SHARKS'; OR, THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF WALL STREET."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

The Russian Imperial Council is drafting a measure for submission to the Douma, forbidding the raising, preparation and sale of opium in all parts of the empire. Since the anti-opium edict in China it was learned recently hundreds of Chinese have started opium cultivating in Siberia, just across the border.

Throughout the eastern part of Siberia it is no extraordinary sight to see peasants in the hilarious stages of intoxication brought on by eating bread. In the region between the sea and the river called Missouri the humidity of the climate as well as the soil is remarkable. In many parts the humidity is so intense that there grows upon ears of corn a species of fungus. As a result of this the bread made from the corn gives all the results of an overdose of alcohol. Whole districts are sometimes inebriated by this strange kind of "alcoholic" bread.

American merchants are losing trade abroad by failing to put full postage on letters to foreign traders, complaints to the Department of Commerce say. From Marseilles the commercial agent has written, saying French importers report about half their American correspondence comes with a two-cent stamp affixed, whereas the rate is five cents for the first ounce and three cents for each additional ounce or fraction thereof. From Argentina, Australia and Africa similar complaints have been received. The department suggests the use of a special colored envelope for foreign correspondence would prevent the oversight.

The most powerful single unit electric locomotives that have been designed up to the present time are now being built for a Swiss railway. These locomotives, ten in number, weigh 168 tons each, total, and would have a weight on their ten drivers (adhesive weight) of eighty-five tons. They are capable of developing 2,500 horse-power at a speed of fifty miles an hour, with a possible increase of speed to seventy-five miles an hour, for an uninterrupted run of one and one-half hours, and can exert a drawbar pull of eighteen thousand kilograms from the standstill.

Curtis C. Baldwin, of Nickerson, Kan., has just invented a machine that threshes standing grain in the field without cutting. Four horses push the machine over the field, and a small gasoline engine drives the thresher. Only two men are required to operate it: one drives the horses and the other ties the sacks of threshed grain and looks after the engine. A machine was made and tried several months ago in a wheat field. It threshed from 25 to 30 acres in a day of ten hours. The principle of the machine is simple. A strong blast of air from a revolving fan is blown against the standing grain, and forces it against a toothed cylinder, which threshes off the grain, depositing it in a trough, from which it is elevated by an auger to another toothed cylinder, which refreshes it. The chaff is blown out, and the clean grain falls into a sack, or may be carried through a tube into a wagon driven alongside.

From the moneys appropriated for the Navy Department there is each year expended \$30,000 for libraries on war vessels. Each ship's library includes 300 books, mostly technical, and on that account more or less expensive. A "crew's library" is usually made up of about 500 books of fiction and of others of an entertaining character. Each year it becomes necessary to replace about one-third of the books. The changes are made upon the recommendation of those in charge of the ships, but it has developed that this is not a satisfactory method, as much depends upon the points of view on literature possessed by the responsible persons. So it is proposed to standardize the libraries by making the changes in Washington, applying them generally to all ships. It is further held that this plan would work for economy, effecting a saving of from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Port Elizabeth is the leading center of the South African ostrich feather trade. Probably the best feathers in the world are produced within this district. Notwithstanding vigorous and repeated efforts in other lands, this industry is largely monopolized in a comparatively small section of Africa. Many reasons have been advanced in explanation, such as climatic conditions, excellence in breeding and superior knowledge as to care of birds. Local experience, however, shows that birds do not thrive in all sections even of this limited area. Breeding certainly appears in most instances in the product of the bird. On the other hand, many birds of more or less indiscriminate breeding produce magnificent feathers. Many important problems appear to be yet unsolved in the scientific production of ostrich feathers, which has received a great deal of attention. The principal one is the defective bar in so many feathers otherwise comparatively perfect. These bars are not found in wild bird feathers.

Sixteen feet of snake was added to the Arsenal menagerie in Central Park recently after eight men had had the battle of their lives getting the 165-pound python into a gunny sack and out again. The snake, which had been "ordered" six months ago by the replenishing department of the menagerie, arrived in the morning in the store of William Bartels & Co. Bill Snyder, head keeper, was advised to bring a small army with him, since the snake, on his way across the ocean, had shown an insurgent disposition. Seven men alighted with Snyder from a motor car an hour later and entered the Bartels store. The python, released from its crate, threshed wildly around the floor. It was not until the primate house in the menagerie was reached, however, that the real battle began. With the eight men clinging desperately to its slippery body, the python squirmed and wriggled and lashed. The keepers were thrown from their feet time and again, but managed to retain their grip. Tiring at last, when the men were almost exhausted, the snake placidly waved itself into the glass case made ready for its reception.

THE BOY DIVERS

OR,

THE MYSTERY OF THE SUNKEN SHIP

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXIII (continued).

Then three of the six men suddenly disappeared through a small door in the large one, forming the portal they had protected.

"Our comrades have gone to the prisoners. Our orders are to kill them rather than allow them to escape!" continued the guard who had last spoken. "And you may carry the door by assault, but that will be the signal for the prisoners' doom," he added.

It seemed that a dilemma which could not be overcome had presented itself. Dick looked apprehensively in the rear.

He saw Onslow's band sweeping down toward the warehouse.

But some of the ruffians had halted at the cabin which Vadna and her father had been seen to enter.

The smugglers had surrounded the building.

There was scarcely any time given Deems or Dick for further argument with the guard at the door of the warehouse.

Almost the ensuing moment the vanguard of Onslow's charging cohorts fell upon the band of Deems'.

As the contending forces were nearly equal in point of numbers, it seemed that the issue of the combat upon which the fate of the divers and the young girl they wished to save depended, must rest upon the superior valor of the faction who had agreed to accept a ransom from them.

There were a few men of the black schooner on that vessel which lay at anchor in the hidden harbor in plain sight of the storage house.

Seeing those men moving upon the deck, and feeling how necessary it was to rally to his support every fighting man to be relied upon, Onslow hastened to dispatch one of his men with a message to the men of the vessel.

He ordered them to come ashore at once and join the ranks of his men.

Deems smiled in derision as he saw Onslow's messenger hastening toward the deck. He readily surmised his purpose, and he said to Dick:

"All the men on the schooner are with me. The vessel is already virtually in the possession of our band. Let the others try to board her and the schooner's guns will be turned upon them at once."

But suddenly the door of the large prison room in which they were shut up opened. In marched the three guards who had left the outer portal.

"If the traitors enter the warehouse at that moment you die!" declared the leader of the guards.

The prisoners felt they were in the very shadow of doom. The sounds of combat without went on. Then—crash! crash! crash! came the noise of an assault upon the door of the storage house.

Meantime, Dick, as the guards were swept away from the door of the storage house by the mad charge of Deems' men, who heeded no order now, though he sought to restrain them, saw a sight which caused his heart to quake.

He had glanced toward the cabin in which Vadna and her father were besieged. He saw the building was wrapped in flames.

Yes, the structure had been fired by the smugglers. They had vainly essayed to force an entrance. The defenders had repulsed them several times. Deadly shots had been fired from the loopholes. Men had fallen. The survivors were filled with rage and the thirst for vengeance.

Dick uttered a cry of horror as he saw the structure which sheltered the devoted girl, who was more than all the world to him, given over to the consuming element.

He bounded away. Madly he sought to reach the burning cabin. At the same time the door of the storage house fell with a crash.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

Before the storage house the battle had been fierce. But the best fighting men among the smugglers were arrayed on the side of Deems. The issue of the conflict remained not long in doubt.

The followers of Onslow were beaten back.

The victory was won when the retreat became a rout. Then Deems showed he was not deficient in policy. Loudly he proclaimed amnesty to all who would join him.

Many were not slow to avail themselves of Deems' offer. Presently all the smugglers who had clung to the waning fortunes of Onslow, save only a dozen men who were stubbornly defiant of the victors, had joined Deems' party.

Onslow and the few men who remained with him beat a hasty retreat, but they went toward the burning cabin whither Dick had directed his flying footsteps.

Deems believed that the prisoners in the warehouse were doomed when the door fell. He did not doubt that the

guard who had entered the prison place would shoot down the captives now before deliverance could reach them.

Having ordered a band of his followers to enter the storage house, and rescue the captives, if by any possibility they had escaped the bullets of the guards, with the rest of his command, Deems followed Onslow's party.

The brave boy, who had so recklessly advanced toward the burning cabin, was meanwhile discovered by the men who besieged the domed building.

They discharged a volley of bullets at the lad, but as he saw they were about to fire, he threw himself flat upon the ground and the missiles of the enemy passed harmlessly over him.

Then, discovering that their comrades were routed and in flight, the men who besieged the cabin took to their heels.

Dick reached it.

The same moment, almost, the door was dashed open and through the flames dashed Captain Lynn, bearing Vadna in his arms.

The men who had assisted in the defense of the cabin closely followed Vadna and her father. But they were not yet out of danger.

Between them and Deems' band came the desperate little band headed by Onslow, who was still intent upon capturing the young girl and her sire.

"We must capture the castaway and the girl. The young diver, too, must fall into our hands. With the three, as hostages, we can compel the arch-traitor to make terms with us yet!" cried Onslow, waving his hand at Deems.

But, making a swift detour, Dick and the party from the cabin sought to flank the enemy and reach the band in pursuit of Onslow.

Just as it seemed they were about to be cut off and captured, the band, led by Deems, came so close upon Onslow's party that despite his frantic efforts to restrain them, they fled in every direction.

Onslow was deserted.

And at that moment a shot from the ranks of Deems' men struck him. The arch-villain fell and did not stir. Charging up to the party with Dick, Deems and his men found that Onslow was no more to be feared.

The smuggler chief was dead.

A ringing shout at that juncture reached Dick. The voice was that of old Dan, the veteran diver. Dick uttered an answering cry, as turning toward the storage house he saw that the three friends who had been imprisoned there had issued forth, unharmed.

They came rapidly to meet Dick.

A most joyful reunion ensued.

Old Dan explained that when the door fell the guards had been about to fire upon him and his companions, when one of their comrades, who had been left without, rushed into the prison room, shouting:

"Deems' men have won the fight, and they swear they'll massacre you all if you harm the prisoners!"

That message was the reprieve of the prisoners. The guards lowered their weapons. The men of the revolution entered. The prisoners were saved.

Deems approached Dick presently and said:

"Now that our victory is complete, our men demand a

slight change in the terms of your ransom. They declare you must deliver the treasure of Sebastian to them at once. Then I swear you shall all be taken away on the black schooner and landed on the Florida coast, where you can easily make your way to Seminole Village. Do you agree?"

"It shall be as the men demand. Follow me!"

The lad had Sebastian Onslow's letter in his pocket. He drew it forth and led the way to the old temple. Consulting the dead man's message, he said, when the temple was reached:

"Look under the seventh stone of the stairway leading to the main entrance."

Provided with the necessary implements, the smugglers eagerly set about the task of removing the stone.

The treasure was found and divided among the band.

An hour later the prisoners were all taken on board the black schooner. The vessel was manned by a crew of picked men from Deems' party. The leader of that faction took command. The vessel set sail.

In due time they were put ashore one night near Seminole Point. Then the black schooner sailed away and the vessel was never more seen by them.

Naturally there was great rejoicing over the safe return of the boy divers and their comrades.

With as little delay as possible Captain Lynn fitted out an expedition to recover the gold from his sunken treasure ship.

The voyage to the locality was safely made, and after some preliminary under-sea explorations by the boy divers and the veteran, the sunken ship was found.

The brave boys and old Dan then set to work with a will to recover the treasure from the sea. They were favored by fine weather and at last the task was done.

Laden with the recovered gold, the steamer of the submarine treasure-hunters returned homeward, and Vadna's future, that of her benevolent foster-father and all her friends, was assured.

Some years later an event which has been foreseen took place. It was, of course, the marriage of Dick and Vadna. Then the former abandoned the perilous calling of a diver, becoming the partner of his father-in-law in a line of southern steamers.

Mark Seaworth was captain of the finest vessel owned by Lynn & Co.

Old Dan retired about that time from the active pursuit of his dangerous profession, having accumulated a comfortable fortune.

THE END.

OUT NEXT WEEK!

—A New Baseball Serial—

BE SURE TO READ

HAND IN HAND

—OR—

THE LUCKY LEGION

By Gaston Garne.

IT WILL INTEREST YOU INTENSELY

OUT NEXT WEEK!

FACTS WORTH READING

AMATEUR RUNNING RECORD BEATEN.

The world's amateur running record for fifty miles was beaten at Stamford Bridge Athletic Grounds, London, England, recently, by E. W. Lloyd, who ran the distance in 6 hours 13 minutes and 58 seconds. J. E. Dixon, the holder of the record since 1885, in that year ran the fifty miles in 6 hours 18 minutes and 26 1-5 seconds. Lloyd's record is 4 minutes and 28 1-5 seconds better.

IN FAVOR OF FORTIFYING THE CANAL.

As a result of the visit of the members of the House Naval Affairs Committee to Guantanamo, Cuba, and Panama, it would seem that the members are in favor of rendering the canal impregnable, and placing a garrison at Panama of sufficient strength to prevent a hostile force from making any attack upon the canal throughout its entire length. Col. Goethals stated before the House Military Committee last January that a garrison of 25,000 men would be needed for this purpose. This is a large force; but when we consider the magnitude of the interests involved, it does not seem to be excessive.

SKI-MAKING IN NORWAY.

This is the latest out-of-the-way industry to be described in the versatile American consular reports. The consul general at Christiania states that Norwegian skis are not made in factories, but by carpenters who devote all their time to this pursuit, in summer laying up a supply for the following winter. They make them in their homes, by hand, and sell direct to the users or to retail stores. Lately Germany has begun to make skis by machinery. The best skis are made of green ash, the next best of oak, and the cheaper grades of fir and pine. They vary in length, the rule being that skis should be as long as the distance from the ground to the height the wearer can reach with extended arm and finger tips. The "bindings" for skis are made by local harness makers and sporting goods factories, and are of pigskin. Skiing poles are made of ash, oak, or bamboo. Near the point a ring of wood encircles the pole, to which it is attached by leather strings; this is to keep the pole from sinking more than a few inches into the snow.

MAKING MARBLES.

Most of the "marbles" so beloved of the small boy are made of clay; the "glass alleys" are made of glass; while agate, to some extent, enters into the manufacture of special and fined "marbles."

The clay is cast into a "pug-mill," or "chaser," and, as the heavy wheels revolve over the clay, it drops, in pulverized form, into a bin beneath the mill. Thence it is lifted, by an endless elevator, to storage bins.

The next step is to force the stiff clay through the perforated base of the pug-mill, from which it emerges in the form of clay strings, the diameter of which is regulated by the round holes in the base of the mill. These rolls or strings of clay are pulled from the pug-mill when they have attained a length of about eighteen inches. They are

placed on flat boards and conveyed to the clay shops, where the "marbles" are made.

When the cubes have been cut, they are placed in an ordinary tin pan and turned over to the workers, generally girls. A handful of cubes is picked up and these are placed, one at a time, in a grooved plaster-of-Paris mold. The size of the groove also depends upon the size of the "marble" to be made. When there is one clay cube in each groove a plaster oblong block is adjusted in position on top of the cubes and pushed forward and backward until the clay cubes become round and rolled true. This operation is one that consumes but little time. The top block is lifted and the clay "marble," in its "green" state, is placed in a tray.

A worker who has acquired skill in her work can, it is said, make from 25,000 to 30,000 a day. "Marbles" are counted by weight; also by the cubic foot. The small clay "marble," measuring nine-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, weighs six and one-half pounds to the thousand, and is colored at the rate of 200,000 every eight minutes.

LARGEST ARTIFICIAL HARBOR IN THE WORLD.

Rotterdam's new harbor, which is rapidly nearing completion, will be the largest artificial harbor in the world, the water having covered 766 acres. It was in 1907 that the municipality voted its construction, and work was at once commenced on those portions lying without or beyond the Maas dyke. As for the polder land within the dykes, a law of expropriation had to be passed. As soon as that was passed, in 1911, work could be commenced there as well. Meanwhile, in the outer dyke portion, a basin of 125 acres, of which 106 acres is 28 feet deep, was completed and at once taken into use. Indeed, as early as 1908 the first sea steamer moored there. So, as soon as the expropriation had taken place, work was commenced on the portion within or behind the dyke. This proceeded but slowly at first, for it had to be done "on the dry," as they say there, by excavation, which can only remove a maximum of 45,000 cubic yards in a week (while dredging machines can in the same time remove 85,000 cubic yards). But there was no other way, for if the water had been let in by piercing the dyke, all the low-lying land behind it would have been flooded, so the portion of the polder destined for the harbor, some 230 acres, had first to be enclosed by a dyke that joined to the existing Maas dyke at each end. This new dyke is 16 feet high and about 7,900 feet long. Behind it is a raised roadway 33 feet wide, where a railway is planned to run right along the harbor. About 1,400,000 cubic yards of earth went toward construction of the dyke and road, the earth being excavated from the harbor.

The last excavator stopped work in October last, and a dredging machine was at once set to work to dredge away the portion of the Maas dyke that still separated the outer from the inner portion, thus letting the water into the new basin. Since then work has proceeded rapidly. When completed the harbor will have a depth of 28 feet.

MARK, THE MONEY-MAKER

—OR—

HOW A SMART BOY GOT RICH

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III (continued).

"I guess so," said Smith, as he tottered away. "Only put somebody in my place to-night."

"Don't yez worry; I'll see to that."

Just then a steamer whistled for an open draw, and Mike got to work at the capstan.

"Mike," said Mark, as he also took a hand at the bar, "that man looked pretty sick. I doubt if he gets back here by to-morrow night."

"I'm afther thinkin' that same mesilf, boy."

"Who will you get to take his place?"

"Be jabbers, I may have to sthay all noight mesilf."

"Does it require experience to work this drawbridge?"

"Shure, no more than yez see now."

"Have you any objection to my taking the job?"

Mike almost dropped his capstan bar.

"You?" he gasped. "Shure, yez are jokin', Mark. It's not a foine enough job for you."

"Isn't it?" said Mark, almost gaily. "Well, I'd have you know that beggars are not always choosers. I am a beggar, or, at least, a pauper, just now, and I'm willing to work at anything."

Mike spat on his hands.

"Arrah, it would be hard work for yez, lad."

"Oh, then, you are not willing."

"Willin'?" ejaculated Mike. "Shure, it's deloighted I am. But mebbe yez will do betther after a while."

"Oh, I expect to. But this shall be my start."

"The job is yours, lad."

"And will Mrs. Maguire give me board?"

"Shure, me house is open to yez foriver, lad, 'an' not a cint to pay."

Mark finally convinced the generous Irishman that it was necessary that he should be allowed to pay his board, and the arrangements were completed. Before the day was spent a messenger arrived with the information that Smith was the victim of a fever, and it would be many weeks before he could resume his work.

Mark had found a job at last.

From that moment he began to rise. Pluck and progress became his motto. He was faithful in his duties as draw tender at the bridge for a month. Then came a change in his career.

Mrs. Maguire was very kind to Mark, and Mike was his sworn friend. Altogether life was not at all unpleasant for Mark at the Maguires.

But he was looking higher. He had never once lost sight of his resolution to make a fortune.

He had received eighteen dollars per week for his work. When the month was ended he had saved up fifty dollars after paying his board and buying a few necessary articles of clothing.

It was really a small sum, but to Mark it was a big start.

At this juncture Smith had recovered sufficiently to go back to work. So Mark was once more out of a job.

But his heart was light. He had the nucleus of his prospective fortune. So the day he bade farewell to the Maguires he set out with gay spirits to seek new scenes and new fortunes.

The whole-souled draw tender and his wife wept when Mark took his departure.

"I will come back to see you some day," the lad declared. "Rest assured I shall never forget your kindness."

"Yez are always welcome," declared Mike, earnestly.

Mark now changed his mind about leaving Westvale forever. The reason for this was plain enough.

The county fair was to be held at Westvale that week. From all parts of the country people were flocking to the great cattle show.

Mark's mercantile instinct told him that here was an opportunity. He had fifty dollars in capital with which he could purchase a small stock in trade and do some business at the fair.

So as he walked on toward Westvale he planned his enterprise. So absorbed did he become that he took the longest road and found himself much out of the way.

He walked on until past the noon hour. Mrs. Maguire had given him a little luncheon, and he cast himself down under a tree by the roadside to eat it.

When he had finished eating drowsiness came over him and he fell asleep. He was awakened by voices.

Mark rose upon his elbows and rubbed his eyes. He looked about him. Nobody was in sight, but he heard voices raised in anger and profanity.

At once he became wide awake. Much interested, he crept through the thicket toward the scene of argument.

In a few moments he reached the brow of a declivity of sand and bushes. He heard the grating of steel on gravel, and partly distinguished the forms of two men.

A moment later they came into view and walked straight toward him. A sense of fear seized Mark.

CHAPTER IV.

SURPRISING INCIDENTS.

The two strange men whom Mark Morton saw and who were now coming straight toward his hiding place, were of

a style well calculated to inspire one with distrust and fear.

One was short and stout, with a heavy jaw and a forbidding, brutish face and red hair.

He was dressed in a seedy suit and wore a slouch hat.

His companion was tall and lanky, with an abnormally long nose. He had ferret eyes and a hang-dog manner which indicated the criminal.

Truly Mark felt that he had never seen two greater specimens of the type of villain in his life.

The stout man carried a long-handled spade in his hand. Mark crouched down in the thicket, and for a moment thought of fleeing.

But the next moment the two strangers turned to the right and passed through a growth of scrub.

"It will be safe enough hyer fer a day or two," said the stout man. "I'll shove the spade into ther bushes, and it'll be all right."

"If we lose it, it'll be your fault," said the tall man, in a nasal voice. "If ye'd taken my advice we'd been out of the country now."

"Yas, that's your style. But I tell you I'm goin' ter hev my revenge afore I go."

"You're a fool!"

"Waal, you're another! But it's an easy thing enough ter do. I ain't afraid ter show my head in Westvale agin. They can't prove nothin' agin us. They ain't got no evidence about us. But ye're a confounded coward."

"I'm prudent, and you're rash. I don't mind crackin' a safe, but when it comes to incendiary work, then I'm out of it."

"Why?"

"Because it's too risky. You never heard of a firebug that didn't get caught."

"You make me tired! D'ye think I've waited these years ter git square with Joe May, ter give up ther chance now?"

"What did he do ter you?"

"He did me a wrong onct, when I was a young man. He swore agin me in court. Blame him! I'll see his mills in ashes before morning. Oh, I've got the plan all laid."

"I don't care how much ye do to him. Only I know the hounds are after us, and we're taking a great risk. I want to git out of the country. There's too much charged agin Darius Small."

"There ain't more agin you than agin Boss Haley. Come on! Let's get out of this."

The two crooks pushed through the underbrush and reached the highway. Mark held his breath with excitement and apprehension.

He would have been dull indeed not to have gathered fearful revelations from the words of these two men.

He understood that Boss Haley, the cracksman, had a grudge against Joseph May, the rich millionaire of Westvale, and father of Jack and Gertrude May.

He meant to consummate his revenge by burning the mills of Westvale. It was a horrible revelation.

Forgotten were his plans and all else in Mark's thrilling interest in this matter.

He was seized with the impulse to at once speed to Westvale and give the alarm. He made sure that the two crooks were out of sight.

But just as he was about to set out for Westvale at full speed a sudden thought came to him.

What had the two villains been doing with a spade in the sandy hollow?

Curiosity overmastered the young listener, and he found footprints and a mound of sand under a bush.

What was under that mound? Had the crooks buried some evidence of a crime there?

It was a grawsome thought. But Mark was a lad of courage. It did not take him long to decide what to do.

He searched in the bushes and found the spade. Then he went back and began to uncover the excavation which had been filled in by the two crooks.

Three feet from the surface the spade touched a hard substance. There was a metallic click.

Mark hastily threw out the sand. In a few moments the truth was known. He knelt down and lifted from the excavation a long and deep tin box which had a handle.

The cover was lightly fastened. Mark raised it and beheld that which gave him a tremendous surprise.

The box was packed with bank-notes of high denomination. Thousands of dollars were in the box.

For a few moments Mark was weak in the knees. He looked about him guiltily, as if his actions might be observed, and as though he might be adjudged a thief.

It was safe to assume that Haley and Small had not come by all this money honestly.

It was ill-gotten booty. But what should he do with it?

This was the question which Mark found it difficult to answer. He wiped the perspiration from his brow.

Not for a moment did the temptation offer itself to possess himself of the treasure.

It was a fortune, and would have given him a mighty start in life. But Mark knew right from wrong.

"It is stolen property, and should be returned to its owner," he decided.

Then a thought came to him. He would take the box of money to Westvale and surrender it to the authorities. They might find the rightful owner.

So Mark took the box on his shoulder, for it was quite heavy, and started. He reached the highway and walked on as fast as he could.

A long stretch of lonely woods intervened before he came to the outskirts of Westvale. Mark's nerves were sorely tried on his way through this dark region.

But he finally emerged safely and entered the outskirts of the town. He was now again in a quandary. He knew that the box would attract attention. Would it be recognized and he adjudged a thief?

But nobody stopped him, and Mark kept on until he reached the house of Mr. White, the town constable. Mr. White met him at the door.

"Why, Mark Morton!" he exclaimed. "We heard you had left the country."

Mark thought the constable's words strange.

"Oh, no, Mr. White," he said. "I have been at work on the Magog drawbridge. But I have something here which I wish to place in your hands. Then I want your advice and assistance."

(To be Continued)

FROM ALL POINTS

A British expedition, under official auspices, is now engaged in the difficult and dangerous task of exploring the little known territory about the headwaters of the Irawadi, the great river of Burma. The expedition consists of two parties, one under Mr. J. Barnard, and one under Mr. F. V. Clark, and will be in the field for about 5 months.

It is estimated that the 25,000,000 tons of shipping which rounds Cape Cod during the year will be so far benefited by the opening of the Cape Cod Canal that it will be perfectly willing to pay a toll for the use of the canal. The 11,000,000 tons of coal shipped annually to eastern ports will find the inner and sheltered route of great advantage and probably the greater part of this, or such part as is carried in barges, will avail itself of the canal.

An agricultural laborer at St. Osyth, near Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, England, earning \$4 a week, has been acquainted with the fact that \$100,000 has been left to him by an old schoolfellow who emigrated to the United States many years ago and died there recently. A Matlock wheelwright, named William Thompson, who states that he inherited \$60,000 from an uncle in Utah, has received almost two hundred letters this week from women who want to marry him or from impecunious wellwishers anxious for gifts or loans. Many of the writers inclosed stamped, addressed envelopes, which Thompson, who declares he can neither read nor write, is having returned in consequence.

It is not often that one hears of such novel use being made of a railway locomotive as to extinguish a fire in a burning building, but a locomotive was recently so employed on the outskirts of a western town. About thirty-five feet from the railway tracks stood a structure constructed principally of wood. This caught fire, and as it would have been impracticable to await the coming of the town fire company, a considerable distance off, the engineer of a train then standing idle on the track conceived it to be his duty to put out the fire. Accordingly he steamed up to a point opposite the burning building, turned on all his steam, and blew out the fire in a few minutes. Steam will, in many cases, smother fire.

The Weather Bureau estimates that in the four days' rainstorm which devastated certain towns and villages in the upper watershed of the Ohio River, sufficient water fell to cover fifteen million acres of land to a depth of one foot. This represents between five and six thousand billion gallons of water. In the presence of such eccentricity of nature, the works of man, whether they be restraining reservoirs or artificial banks or what not, become mere pygmies and utterly futile for restraint. A four-day rainfall which will cover such a State as Ohio with a depth of seven inches, is a phenomenon of nature which is beyond all possibilities of control by any appliances that are known in the present stage of engineering knowledge. All we can hope for is to mitigate disaster.

Recently herring by the million were in Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. The locks of the Delaware City terminus were so filled with fish that vessels had trouble in passing through. The same condition exists at the Chesapeake City, Md., end. Many vessels that pass through the canal en route to and from Philadelphia and Baltimore are of such dimensions that their sides scrape the walls of the locks. As a result, thousands upon thousands of herring are crushed with the passage of each boat. Residents of Delaware City and Chesapeake City seized the opportunity to reduce the cost of living and caught many tons of herring. The reason for the scarcity of shad this season is a mystery. It is believed the blame for the scarcity of shad will be placed on the unprecedented number of herring in Northern waters this spring.

Government officials state that, by the time the Panama Canal is opened, ships may sail through terraced green lawns instead of the bare yellow earth slopes now in evidence. The reason is not altogether an esthetic one. It is believed that seeding the sloping sides of the canal through the cuts with a strong grass may prevent the slides now so frequent and will reduce the wearing effects of the tropical rains. An expert botanist from the Smithsonian Institution has been intrusted with the task of testing this theory, and the Department of Agriculture has co-operated to the extent of shipping to Panama thousands of pounds of grass seed. It is pointed out that, even though it be impossible entirely to prevent the occasional big slides, it is almost certain that the planting of grass seed will result in a great saving by holding the ground from starting except under great pressure and by reducing the erosion which brings down a tremendous amount of earth in the course of a year.

Auction sales are accompanied by a great deal of noise, and in order to do away with this an electrical method has appeared in Holland which seems quite promising, and the sales are now carried on almost in silence. It is now applied to selling eggs by auction, according to the custom which prevails in the agricultural centers throughout the country in the weekly markets. Eggs are auctioned off in 1,500 lots, and on the new plan each bidder has a numbered seat with a push button and wiring. The seller is stationed in front of a large dial having prices ranged around it from lowest to highest. There is also a large board containing like numbers which can be electrically lighted, and these are connected to the seats. After the proper announcement of the lot of eggs as to quality and weight, the seller starts the hand slowly moving around the dial. When at any figure, the buyer presses his button and the corresponding figure on the board lights up, and his number is registered by an annunciator. As the hand moves on, the next bidder can register a higher number, and so on until the bidding is finished. The method is said to work very well, and no doubt can be applied to all kinds of auction sales.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, JUNE 6, 1913.

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BRIEF BUT POINTED ITEMS

In Tibet sheep and goats are used as pack animals, and a flock of these animals, well loaded, journey from there to the Rampur Fair, in India. The hardy little beasts take over a month on the long and arduous journey, traversing on the way several high passes, where other pack animals would be useless.

The cotton handkerchiefs supplied to French soldiers have now printed upon them a number of sanitary precepts to be observed on the march and during a campaign, and are further decorated with pictures of officers of all grades, so that a French private can tell at a glance to what grade any officer he may see belongs.

The following note, signed "Christian," was received recently in the office of the Collector of Customs: "Collector of Customs—Dear Sir: Inclosed please find forty cents for duty which was not paid on 3 gallons honey which was misrepresented by a party who brought it to me from the West Indies a short time ago; believe a gallon is allowed free, therefore am paying on the excess 2 gallons; it pays to do right at all times, whether you are rich or poor."

Three Americans may attempt within the next few months to swim the English Channel, the goal that the world's best distance paddlers have ever held in sight. The candidates for the gruelling test are Charles Durborow of Philadelphia, Joseph M. Callahan of Pittsburgh, and Benjamin H. Schlobberg of New York. Durborow is an amateur, and a member of the Philadelphia Swimming Club. The other two are life savers. Callahan has been attached for seven years to the Atlantic City squad of professionals.

Express companies have been hit hard by the operation of the parcel post system, according to statements submitted to the Interstate Commerce Commission by counsel for the companies in their final arguments against the reduction in express rates proposed by the commission. It was declared that the companies had suffered a loss approximating 25 per cent. in small package business—a loss which amounts to about 6 per cent. of gross revenues.

Walker D. Hines asserted that for the five companies he represented—the Adams, American, United States, Southern and Wells Fargo—application of the proposed rates to present business would reduce revenues about \$26,000,000 a year, or 5.85 cents on every dollar's worth of business done, and this would be absolutely destructive. B. F. Fairchild, of the New York Chamber of Commerce, for the express shippers, attacked Mr. Hines' argument as "purely theoretical and hypothetical," and insisted that the proposed rates would yield an ample revenue. He maintained also that the present allowances made by the express companies to the railroads for transportation service were excessive.

JOKES AND JESTS.

Muggins—Henpecke has a wonderful admiration for that youngster of his. Buggins—Yes, the boy actually talks back to his mother.

Languid Leary—Don't you wish ye had an automobile, Pete? Perambulating Pete—Rather have a horse. Steerin' 'em's too much like work.

Tom—She's as sweet as sugar. Dick—Adulterated sugar? Tom—No; why? Dick—I thought it must be, she has such a sandy complexion.

Foote Lighte—Was that London melodrama realistic? Sue Brette—It was, indeed! Why, the people on the stage seemed to be in a fog nearly all the time.

New Maid—The grocer and the baker left the eggs and cream, ma'am. Mrs. Housekeep—I hope they are fresh. New Maid (blushingly)—Well, they each stole a kiss, ma'am.

A shipwrecked sailor said they were out of provisions in an open boat, for 20 days. "How did you live?" "Sure, sir, we dined on one of the officers. It was the first mate we'd had in a month."

Butcher—You've six or eight new boarders, ain't you, mum? Miss Slimdiet—Less. They came yesterday. How did you know? Butcher—I noticed you was buying half a pound more of everything.

Mamma—Why, Susie, you've offered your butterscotch to everybody but your little brother. Why don't you hand it to him? Susie (with innocent candor)—Because, mamma, little brother always takes it.

"I told the editor I had some practical ideas I wanted to carry out." "What did he say?" "He professed to be delighted. 'Carrying them out,' he said, 'was neater and quieter than throwing them out.'"

One day a tramp entered a chemist's shop in Wrexham with the usual "I beg pardon sir—" "Oh, that's all right, my man; don't you trouble about that," said the proprietor, "so long as you don't beg anything else."

A COWBOY AND HIS OUTFIT.

By Paul Braddon.

One of the most picturesque characters to be found in the story of American frontier life, the cowboy, will soon be known no more. There will be great farms devoted to stock-raising for many years to come, but the cowboy of the unfenced range has lost his occupation. The range has been covered first on one side and then on another by the flood tide of homesteaders, until there is no place left in the Southwest, save on the waste lands of the Indian Territory and a part of western Texas, where cattle can be raised and kept on the range, subsisting on the grass and water that nature supplied spontaneously the year round. No Man's Land, which from its not being subject to entry would, one would think, have been the last stronghold of the cowman, as the cattle owner is called, and his assistant, the cowboy, has been cut up into homesteads, and but one cattle range worth mentioning, that of Ludwig Kramer, on Clear Creek, about fifty-five miles from Meade, Kansas, remains, and he has but hundreds of cattle where once there were tens of thousands.

The cowboys resisted the grangers, as they call the settlers, desperately. They drove their herds across the settlers' fields, they rounded up and drove off the settlers' little bunches of cattle and horses, they shot his sheep and hogs, they shot the settler himself. One case is on record where two settlers were bound in chains, saturated with kerosene, set on fire and burned to death. But the advance of the settler was not even checked by the efforts of the cowboy. The settler could and did shoot as well as the cowboy, and for every stalk of corn and for every sheep and hog that fell before the advancing herds of cattle and their attendants it is likely that ten steers paid the cost with their lives, while quite as many cowboys as settlers died violent deaths. With the cowman it was a question of profit. As he got hemmed in by the settlers he found not only the feed for his cattle circumscribed, but he found the increase in his herds seriously cut off by the Winchesters of the settlers, in spite of the vigilance of his cowboys. There was nothing for it but to sell out and go into some other business.

People all over western Kansas and No Man's Land are full of stories and reminiscences of cowboy life. In fact, plenty of the citizens of these Western villages served as cowboys at one time and another before they became merchants, mechanics, professional met, etc., in some favorite location for a town site. One hears on every hand expressions that were technical in the cowboys' camp. Landlord Osgood calls his guests to breakfast in the morning with the song that the cowboy sings while riding around his cattle at night to keep them from getting frightened and stampeding, thus:

"Hay-a-a-a—Yo-o-o-o—Hay-a-a-a-a—Yo-o-o-o—Breakfast!"

When anything is tied up it is said to be roped, from the term which the cowboy applied to the use of the lasso. A man's household goods are termed an outfit. So is his kit of tools, if a mechanic; his library and appliances, if a surgeon or lawyer; his safe, desks, etc., if a banker. So,

too, is the clique he associates with socially. He belongs to a poker outfit if he plays cards with regularity, or to a pious outfit if he goes to church.

People in the East have often read of the cowboy when on a spree "shooting up the town," or lynching a horse thief, but not very many know anything about the real life of the cowboy, and of what his outfit is composed or what it costs.

The most important article in the cowboy's outfit is the chuck wagon, or the wagon over which the cook presides. It is a common prairie schooner with hoops over it to stretch a canvas roof on, so that such perishable goods as salt, sugar, and flour can be protected from the weather. At the back is a cupboard, where such things as baking powder, pepper, coffee, dishes, etc., are kept. There are pots and frying pans a-plenty, and the larder is always well supplied. Bacon is generally preferred to salt pork, and fresh beef is kept constantly on hand by killing a steer from the herd as the occasion requires. The owners of the herd supply the food, and such tools as shovels, axes, etc.

The shovel, it is interesting to know, is generally of much more use than the axe. When taking a wagon across the streams it is often necessary to cut down the banks on each side to form an inclined plane, for perpendicular banks three or four feet high are common. Then, too, the streams very often run underground. The bed of a creek may be covered with sand and gravel burning hot, but by digging two or three feet—sometimes as much as six or eight—pure, sweet water may be had in abundance.

Timber for fuel may be had in some parts of a range and not in others, but when it is abundant the cowboy's cook generally prefers the ancient buffalo chips, which he calls Kansas or prairie coal.

Next to the chuck wagon among the needs of the cowboy is his pony. The Texas pony is a marvel to an Eastern man. It weighs from 500 to 600 pounds only, but it canterers away for forty or fifty miles with a well-grown man—say from 150 to 170 pounds weight on its back, and then rustles for its feed, and comes up fresh for another canter of the same length next day. The cowboys tell of much greater feats of strength and endurance than this.

Each cowboy, however, is supplied with six ponies by the owner, because while a pony can stand several days of hard riding in succession, it is more economical to have several on hand, and give each a chance to rest between rides. The ponies are worth only from \$20 to \$30 each. They are a vicious lot, and buck ecstatically every time they are mounted. The gentleman of whom Mark Twain tells who recommended a mustang because it could outbuck anything in the Territory, if such a gentleman ever existed, was probably honest in what he said, for the cowboys here say that the more vicious a pony is the more hard riding it can stand. The cattle owner supplies corn for the ponies, and they get two feeds a day of from six to eight big ears at a feed.

The Saginaw Company, down on the North Fork of the Canadian in Oklahoma, has 3,500 cattle, and keeps ten cowboys and a cook to care for them. The company that has leased the Cherokee outlet has many thousands more. There is, therefore, quite a bunch of ponies with such an outfit, and a wagon has to make frequent trips to a country where corn is raised to keep them supplied with corn.

The cowman supplies the cowboy with four blankets, saddle, bridle, and lasso, as well as ponies, but the cowboy who has any style about him scorns both the saddle and the lasso furnished by the company. The company saddle is simply a substantial skeleton costing not more than \$10. The cowboy buys his own, and it costs \$50 at least. It is made of stamped and embroidered leather, and everything about it is of the very best quality. One firm in Wichita, Kansas, has made a great fortune by first making the very best saddle that can be made by human skill, and then charging three prices for it. The cowboy pays the price because he is sure of getting the best saddle made.

Other essentials of the cowboy outfit are the repeating rifle and the six-shooter. A good rifle costs \$25, and a good six-shooter but little less. The cowboy must have ivory or other fancy handles, and the mountings must be of gold and silver. But this weapon, although fancy, is deadly in the right hands.

To return to the pony trappings, the spurs of a cowboy are worth mentioning. A cheap pair made of maleable cast iron can be bought for twenty-five cents. The fancy spurs cost from two to five dollars a pair. They are plated with silver, and engraved in fancy designs, sometimes, but the part to which the cowboy directs his attention when buying is the rowel or wheel, and the bell. The wheel must have long and substantial spokes. The bell is a little piece of steel shaped like the clapper of a bell. It is secured to the fork that holds the rowel. For business purposes it is dropped in between two spokes of the rowel and thus prevents the rowel turning. Having done this, the cowboy can drop down over the side of his pony, catching the rowel in his saddle to support one end of his body, hanging to the pommel with one hand to support the other, and working the trigger of the six-shooter under the neck of his pony to make things interesting for the enemy. In the days when Indians were in the habit of stampeding herds at every opportunity the rowel and bell were of great importance in a running fight.

The article of wearing apparel which is the pride of the cowboy's heart is his hat. A good broad-brimmed hat cannot be bought for less than \$6. The very bests costs \$20. That is for the hat. The hat band is bought extra. A leather band with a clinking brass chain attached may be had for a dollar. A cord of braided gold lace, such as a cowboy would wear in society, costs from \$7.50 to \$10.

But it is not altogether as a matter of fancy that expensive hats are bought. The broad brim is a great protection to the back of the neck and the face when riding in a storm across the range. A storm on the range is like a gale at sea. The wind sweeps unimpeded over the level prairie, and drives the rain or snow against the cowboy almost with the force of a charge of birdshot. The best hat—the one that is at once warm and waterproof—is good enough on such occasions, but none too good.

Singularly enough, the cowboy cares as little for the quality of his suit of clothes as he does about the cost of his pony. A \$12 suit of store clothes, such as would cost \$9 in New York, are good enough for him, while his suit of flannels will not cost him above \$4. In some parts of the country, leather trousers that are laced, instead of sewed up on the outer seams, are in use. They cost from \$6 to \$7 a pair, and are valued because they wear well,

and because snakes cannot bite through them. Then, too, the cowboy usually has a set of slickers. Slickers are called oilskins by seafaring men. They are made of duck, and are made waterproof by a soaking in oil.

As might be inferred from what has been written, the bill of fare of the cowboy consists chiefly of bread and bacon, and beef and coffee. Butter and milk are almost unknown, although there are thousands of cows on the range.

The daily experience of the cowboy is monotonous in most respects, but not infrequently he has enough excitement in fifteen to last some men a lifetime. By day he must keep the cattle moving slowly about so that they will have some exercise. One herd of 800 in the Peoria reservation, which the reporter saw, had a range of ten miles. They were driven over most of this and back once a day. At night, when the cattle lie down to sleep, a small bunch like 800 will be left to care for itself. With a herd like the Saginaw Company's, 3,500 strong, two men rode constantly around the herd all night singing in a monotonous chant "Hay-a-a-a—Yo-o-o, Hay-a-a-a—Yo-o-o." To stop for a minute was extremely dangerous, for the cattle, missing the song to which they were accustomed, would become uneasy. The cowboys stand watches of two hours' length at night.

Sometimes through carelessness, but often in spite of care, the cattle will become alarmed. It is as if they saw a ghost, the cowboys say. In an instant there are thousands on their feet, and away they go on a mad gallop, straight to destruction, if they cannot be turned. This is the moment that tries the nerve of the cowboy. He must get them to circling—running in a circle—and there is but one way to do it. They will blindly follow a leader, and he must be that leader. Spurring his pony into a wilder gallop than that of the cattle, he must ride in ahead of the frightened herd and continue without a tremor in his voice his song of "Hay-a-a-a—Yo-o-o; hay-a-a-a—Yo-o-o," even though it is his own death knell, for should his pony slip on the wet grass, or put its foot in the hole of a badger or a prairie dog, he will go down under the feet of the frightened cattle, and have the life trampled out of him before he has time to think. A good many cowboys have died that way, they say, but no one has ever thought of erecting a monument over their graves.

Sometimes there are cattle in the herd that will not follow the cowboy leader as he strives to make them circle. These tangents, as they are called, must be shot down instantly, and it is for this reason the cowboy must learn to handle the six-shooter as well as the lariat.

The cowboy generally sleeps in the open air. He may crawl under a chuck wagon in case of a rain, but he usually sleeps out. When the cattle remain in a definite locality for a length of time he may build a house or shanty where there is timber. Tents are used sometimes.

There is one thing about the cowboy that is greatly to his credit. He pays his debts. Frank Palmer, a Beaver City merchant, said that he had trusted them to the extent of \$10,000, at least, and out of it all had lost but one bill of about \$16. He did not even count that lost, for, though long overdue, he said the man would come and pay it if he lived.

GOOD READING

Already the United States Navy has lost the second position in rank among the naval powers. Germany has surpassed us, and now we are confronted with the probability of having to give place to France, whose navy under the new administration has taken on new life and is advancing by leaps and bounds. The relative positions of the two fleets in 1916 will be France, ten dreadnoughts, the United States, eight; France, ten superdreadnoughts, the United States, five. In that year the total displacement of dreadnoughts and superdreadnoughts will be 376,000 tons for France and 310,000 for the United States.

Major General von Lewinski, the Prussian military attache to Bavaria, was killed at Munich by a supposed lunatic, who fired three revolver shots at him. A sergeant of police was also killed. The man, whose name is Straffer, attacked the general on a crowded street, first firing several shots at him and then turning his weapon on Police Sergeant Pollender, who dashed to the officer's assistance. The policeman was killed by a shot through the heart. The assailant was meanwhile seized by a crowd of people who tried to lynch him and succeeded in seriously injuring him before he was rescued by the police and arrested.

A factory in Grenoble, France, utilizes the water of a reservoir situated in the mountains at a height of 200 yards. The water reaches the factory through a vertical tube of the same length, with a diameter of considerably less than an inch, the jet being used to move a turbine. Experiments have showed that the strongest men cannot cut the jet with the best tempered sword; and in some instances the blade has been broken into fragments without deflecting a drop of the water, and with as much violence as a pane of glass may be shattered by a blow from an iron bar. It has been calculated that a jet of water a small fraction of an inch in thickness, moving with sufficient velocity, could not be cut by a rifle bullet.

A new industry to overcome local option conditions in lower Delaware has developed at Lewes and at the Delaware Breakwater. Mackerel fishermen from New England ports are supplying the "dry" section with liquor by selling pints and half-pints concealed in mackerel. "But a fish and get a big drink," is the slogan of the fishermen, and it is netting them considerable money. When Governor Miller recently approved an act prohibiting the shipment of liquor into Kent and Sussex counties, "dry" sections, the bibulous residents of Lewes and vicinity became alarmed. The Webb bill had previously stopped interstate shipments of "booze." Ingenious Yankees, on a mackerel boat from New England laid in a large supply of "booze" before reaching Delaware and opened a large number of fish and placed bottles of liquor inside. Then the fish "and contents" were offered for sale. There was soon a big demand for the fish, and other mackerel fishermen learned of the plan and emulated it.

In the night and day non-stop motor run which the Chicago Automobile Club plans to leave Chicago on June 25 to go to Boston, one of the rules is that no time is to be allowed for the changing of tires or tire repairs made on the way. In other such runs time has been allotted for changing tires or for fitting non-skid devices. The members of the rules committee have figured it out that with detachable and demountable rims in such general use changes can be made with very little loss of time and that with proper preparation a contestant will not be forced to make many changes. Fifteen minutes will be allowed at each control for relief of drivers and observers and for replenishments of fuel, oil and water. No work will be permitted on the cars when on the road, but in the time allowed in the control the driver may add to or draw from oil and grease in the various cases without penalty. Many of the manufacturers said that with pressure feed gasoline systems it would be impossible to fill the tanks with the motors kept running. For use on controls a gravity tank will be allowed on cars of this type. There will be a penalty of 25 points for the first minute of each motor stop or fraction thereof and one point additional for each succeeding minute or fraction thereof.

The Navy Department has on free exhibition on the first and second floors of the east wing of the State, War and Navy Department Building a collection of miniature models of the various classes of vessels of the navy that is of especial interest and well worthy of inspection. These miniature vessels are constructed at the Washington Navy Yard at a cost of from \$3,000 to \$5,000 apiece and are exact duplications in all the minute details of the vessels they represent. The models are constructed on a scale of quarter-inch to the foot; that is, a ship that is actually 400 feet long is represented in a model 100 inches long. Arranged in the corridor of the first floor of the department and open to the public inspection are models of the battleships North Dakota, South Carolina, Florida, the old and new Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, the destroyer Roe, the cruiser St. Louis, the smaller vessels Annapolis, Wheeling, Dubuque and Cumberland and the collier Neptune, with her strange, bridge-like looking top hamper. Two models are shown of the Connecticut class of battleship, one being a sectional view showing the interior arrangements of turrets, engine and fire rooms, and the structural subdivision of the vessel. Of particular interest in this collection is an exhibit of relics recovered from the old Maine at the time when she was raised from the bottom of Havana Harbor, and a detail model representative of the destructive effects of the explosion that destroyed that vessel on Feb. 15, 1898, together with a miniature submarine. The remainder of the exhibit is on view on the second floor corridor, and contains models of several historical vessels, among them being the flagships Olympia, the Saratoga (formerly the New York) and the Brooklyn, together with a miniature submarine.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

WIDOW OF MAXIMILIAN STILL IN FAIRLY GOOD HEALTH.

The health of the Ex-Empress Charlotte, of Mexico, a sister of the late King Leopold of the Belgians, who was reported by several newspapers to be dying, continues fairly good. She took a walk in the park on April 1st

Princess Charlotte, daughter of Leopold I., King of the Belgians, was married in 1857, when only seventeen years old, to Maximilian, the Austrian archduke, who was induced to accept the crown of Emperor of Mexico in 1863, and met the fate that has so often overtaken those who would be rulers of the Mexicans. He refused to abdicate, and in 1867 was shot. The death of the Emperor deranged the mind of the Empress, and ever since she has been mad. Maximilian was a brother of the present Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary.

\$50,000 OFFERED FOR FLIGHT ACROSS OCEAN.

A prize of \$50,000 for the first aeroplane to cross the Atlantic is offered by the London Daily Mail to encourage waterplanes, which are considered the best aircraft for Britain.

The offer is open to any person who first crosses the Atlantic from any point in the United States, Canada, Newfoundland to any point in Great Britain or Ireland in seventy-two continuous hours. The flight may be made in the reverse direction.

Comte de Lambert, of Paris, declares that within ten years the full distance from the United States to Great Britain will be traversed by waterplanes between sunrise and sunset of a long summer day.

The Daily Mail also announces a prize of \$25,000 for the first flight of a waterplane of British invention around England, Scotland and Wales within seventy-two continuous hours.

THE KAISER APOLOGIZES.

The German Emperor's trouble with his tenant, Helmuth Sohst, on his estate at Kadinen, has been settled amicably, after being before the courts for several months. Sohst is to receive \$30,000 as compensation, while a letter sent to him from the Emperor's secretary is understood to contain his majesty's explanations and regrets.

It is stated that Sohst is to receive the Order of the Royal Crown as a token of the Emperor's retraction of the statement he had made that he had "thrown out his tenant because he was utterly inefficient."

The tenant has consented to vacate his farm voluntarily before the expiration of his lease, which has another five years to run.

The settlement was formally arranged by the Agricultural Council of the province of West Prussia, but the credit for it is understood to be due to the Crown Prince, who undertook to inform his father of the extent to which he had been misinformed by his representative on the Kadinen estate, and of the necessity of making amends to Helmuth Sohst.

FOND OF READING OF HIS ROBBERIES.

Frederick Marks, who is under arrest in Boston, charged with forgery and larceny, confessed the other day that it was the risk he took and the pleasure he derived from reading the newspaper stories of his daring, not the actual need of money, that induced him to swindle the Red Hook National Bank in Dutchess County, New York, out of \$8,900 and a Boston broker out of \$15,000 by means of forged drafts. Marks was arrested in Jacksonville, Fla., a few days ago by detectives who trailed him from Boston. He had \$7,000 in cash in his possession. The forged draft which Marks deposited in the Red Hook Bank was for \$12,000, and he averted suspicion by not asking for the full amount of the draft. At Red Hook he posed as a retired farmer and easily won the confidence of the bankers. From here he went to Boston and engaged a suite of rooms in a fashionable hotel there. He said he did this because he knew the police would not look for him there. He spent money lavishly, changed his name to Frank Lamoyne, and grew a mustache. He said it was easy to evade the police and deceive bankers by a sufficient display of prosperity, having bought \$15,000 worth of negotiable bonds from the Boston broker and turning the paper into cash at a bank half a block away.

CROP WATCHERS OF CHINA.

In China the fields are not protected by hedges or fences; the country lies quite open and is everywhere easily accessible. This is not to be interpreted as an indication of the peculiar honesty of the people or of their exceptional respect for their neighbors' property. As a matter of fact, thieving abounds. Large numbers of the people are very poor, and this class in order to subsist have frequent recourse to stealing. As the time of harvest approaches and the fruits and cereals are ripening orchards and fields are never safe from the unwelcome visitations of predatory bands. The farmer knows this, and hence everybody is obliged to stand guard over everything. Almost every field has its watch tower, says a writer in the Wide World Magazine, and these frail tenements are never deserted, night or day, until the harvest has been fully reaped. In some districts "crop watching societies" exist, whose sole business is to provide professional "crop watchers" where and whenever they may be required. Fields of kaoliang, or giant millet, are watched by a professional "crop watcher." This stalwart plant grows a height of ten to fifteen feet and a field of it is a veritable jungle for density and impenetrability. This accounts for the height of the watch tower—a light wooden structure. The watcher must, if his vigil is to be of any use, be higher than the crops he is looking after. Even so it is exceedingly difficult to detect the thieves, they are so effectually hidden by the tall and dense growth of the kaoliang. The object of the thieves is to possess themselves of the millet heads of the plants, and this they can very easily accomplish. All that is necessary are a sharp knife and a quick hand.

VENTRiloquism

Almost anyone can learn it at home. Small cost. Send to-day 2-cent stamp for particulars and proof. O. A. SMITH, Room 187 - 823 Bigelow St., Peoria, Ill.

MAGIC COINER.

A mystifying and amusing trick. Tin blanks are placed under the little tin cup and apparently coined into dimes. A real money-maker. Price, 20c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE FOUNTAIN RING.

A handsome ring connected with a rubber ball which is concealed in the palm of the hand. A gentle squeeze forces water or cologne in the face of the victim while he is examining it. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing ring in water same as a fountain pen filler. Price by mail, postpaid, 12c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

TRICK FAN.

A lady's fan made of colored silk cloth. The fan may be used and then shut, and when it opens again, it falls in pieces; shut and open again and it is perfect, without a sign of a break. A great surprise for those not in the trick. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

Ayvad's Water-Wings



Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-hankerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthpiece.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ITCH POWDER.

Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It will make him scratch, roar, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 16 cents a box, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFE NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK GUN FOB

The real western article, carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather, with a highly nickelized buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN,
419 W. 56th St., N. Y.



Sure Fire
Accuracy
Penetration

The World's Record Holders

Remington-UMC .22 cal. cartridges have broken two records in two years.

The present world's 100-shot gallery record, 2484 ex 2500, held by Arthur Hubalek was made with these hard hitting .22's.

They will help you, too, to break your best shooting records.

Remington-UMC .22's are made, too, with hollow point bullets. This increases their shocking and killing power.

Remington-UMC—the perfect shooting combination

REMINGTON ARMS-UNION METALLIC CARTRIDGE CO.

299 Broadway, New York City

REMINGTON
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The Remington-UMC cubs make a find

TOBACCO HABIT CONQUERED IN 3 DAYS

I offer a genuine, guaranteed remedy for tobacco or snuff habit, in 72 hours. It is mild, pleasant, strengthening. Overcomes that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco or snuff. One man in 10 can use tobacco without apparent injury; to the other 9 it is poisonous & seriously injurious to health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas, belching, gnawing, or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach; constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, lung trouble, catarrh, melancholy, neurasthenia, impotency, loss of memory and will power, impure (poisoned) blood, rheumatism, lumber, sciatica, neuritis, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, enervation, lassitude, lack of ambition, falling out of hair, baldness, and many other disorders. It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to cure yourself of tobacco or snuff habit by sudden stopping—don't do it. The correct method is to eliminate the nicotine poison from the system, strengthen the weakened, irritated membranes and nerves and genuinely overcome **SECRET FREE** the craving. You can quit tobacco and enjoy yourself a thousand times better while feeling always in robust health. My FREE book tells all about the wonderful 3 days Method. Inexpensive, reliable. Also Secret Method for conquering habit in another without his knowledge. Full particulars including my book on Tobacco and Snuff Habit mailed in plain wrapper, free. Don't delay. Keep this show to others. This adv. may not appear again. Mention if you smoke or chew. Address: EDWARD J. WOODS, 534 Sixth Ave., 228A, New York, N. Y.

Rider Agents Wanted

In each town to ride and exhibits sample Ranger bicycles. Write for our latest special offer.

Finest Guaranteed \$10 to \$27

with Coaster-Brakes, Puncture-Proof tires
1911 & 1912 Models \$7 to \$12
all of best makes....

100 Second-Hand Wheels

All makes and models, good as new..... \$3 to \$8

Great FACTORY CLEARING SALE

We Ship on Approval without a cent deposit, pay the freight, and allow

10 DAY'S FREE TRIAL.

TIRES, coaster-brake rear wheels,

lamps, sundries, parts and repairs at half usual

prices. DO NOT BUY until you get our catalogues and offer. Write now.

MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept R188 Chicago, Ill.

Wizard Repeating LIQUID PISTOL

Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury.

Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling the trigger. Loads from any liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Send money order. No postage stamps or coins accepted.

PARKER, STEARNS & CO., 273 GEORGIA AVE., BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Nickel-plate,
5 in. long.
Pat'd.

Brighten Your Wits

with our brain tickling puzzles. Sample for 10 cents or three good ones for 25 cents. Catalog included.

WONDER NOVELTY CO., Dept. I, Box 123, St. Paul, Minn.

LOTS OF FUN FOR A DIME

Ventriloquist Double Threat. Fits roof of mouth; always invisible; greatest thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary, and imitate birds and beasts of the field and forest. Loads of fun. Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Price: only 10 cents; 4 for 25 cents, or 12 for 50 cents. Double Threat Co. Dept. K Frenchtown, N.J.



I will send as long as they last my 25c book

STRONG ARMS

for 10 Cents in Stamps or Cash

Illustrated with 20 full-page, half-tone cuts, showing exercises that will quickly develop, beautify and gain great strength in your shoulders, arms and hands, without any apparatus.

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE,

I will be pleased to answer any question on developing or reducing any other part of your body, without additional charge.

PROF. ANTHONY BARKER
1788 Barker Bldg., 110 W. 42d St., N. Y.

Established 28 years in New York City

Eight Games for 10c

Chess, Checkers, Fox and Geese, Nine Men Morris, Authors, Introduction Game, Spanish Prison, Dominoes; a whole year's amusement and the whole thing for only 10c today and get all eight games

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KEARSLEY CO., 117 Winston, Los Angeles, Cal.

BASEBALL OUTFIT FREE

BOYS! Here is your chance to get a fine baseball outfit, consisting of complete suit, including shin, pants, cap and belt, good quality, extra well sewed, or combination of big catcher's mitt, fielder's glove, catcher's mask (extra strong and durable) and rubber center ball, big league style, or fine chest protector. Will Not Cost One Cent. Send your name and we will send you a set of our fine pictures to dispose of at 25 cents each. Send us the \$2 you collect and for your trouble will send you outfit as described. WRITE TODAY for pictures. No harm done. I take back what you can't sell.

M. O. Seitz, 2M91 Chicago

MYSTERIOUS SKULL.



Shines in the dark. The most frightful ghost ever shown. A more startling effect could not be found. Not only will it afford tremendous amusement, but it is guaranteed to scare away burglars, bill collectors, and book agents. It cannot get out of order and can be used repeatedly. Price, 4x5 inches, 15c., by mail.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every neck and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

JUMPING JACK PENCIL.

This pencil is made up in handsome style and looks so inviting that every one will want to look at it. The natural thing to do is to write with it, and just as soon as your friend tries to write, the entire inside of the pencil flies back like a jumping jack, and "Mr. Nosy" will be frightened stiff. It is one of our best pencil tricks and you will have a hard job trying to keep it. Your friends will try to take it from you. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

NEW SURPRISE NOVELTY.

Foxy Grandpa, Mr. Peewee and other comical faces artistically colored, to which is attached a long rubber tube, connected with a rubber ball, which can be filled with water, the rubber ball being carried in the pocket, a slight pressure on the bulb causes a long stream, the result can easily be seen.

Price, 15c., Postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK BANKS.

Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickelized brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

IMITATION CIGAR BUTT.

It is made of a composition, exactly resembling a lighted cigar. The white ashes at the end and the imitation of tobacco-leaf being perfect. You can carelessly place it on top of the tablecloth or any other expensive piece of furniture, and await the result. After they see the joke everybody will have a good laugh. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

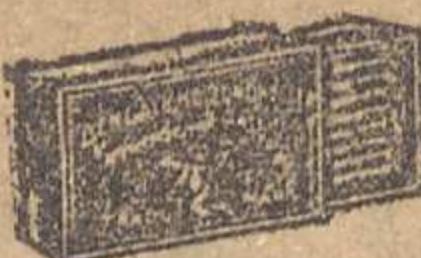
AUTOMATIC COPYING PENCIL.

The importance of carrying a good reliable pencil need not be dwelt upon here. It is an absolute necessity with us all. The holder of this pencil is beautifully nickelized with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry.

Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

TRICK MATCHES.



Consist of a Swedish safety box, filled with matches, which will not light. Just the thing to cure the match borrowing habit. Price, 5c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

POCKET SAVINGS BANK.



A perfect little bank, handsomely nickel plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

TRICK CUP.



Made of natural white wood turned, with two compartments; a round, black ball fits on those compartments; the other is a stationary ball. By a little practice you make the black ball vanish; a great trick novelty and immense seller.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE AUTOPHONE.



A small musical instrument that produces very sweet musical notes by placing it between the lips with the tongue over the edge, and blowing gently into the instrument. The notes produced are not unlike those of the fife and flute. We send full printed instructions whereby anyone can play anything they can hum, whistle or sing, with very little practice. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

MAGIC PIPE.



Made of a regular corn-cob pipe, with rubber figures inside; by blowing through the stem the figure will jump out. Made in following figures: rabbits, donkeys, cats, chickens, etc.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

MAGIC MIRROR.

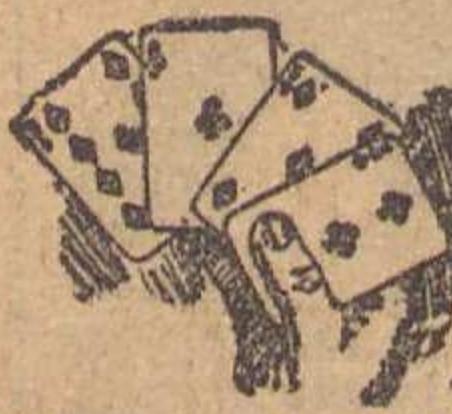


Fat and lean funny faces. By looking in these mirrors upright your features become narrow and elongated. Look into it sidewise and your phiz broadens out in the most comical manner. Size 3 1/4 x 2 1/4 inches, in a handsome imitation morocco case.

Price, 10c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.



Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price, by mail, 10c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

PICTURE POSTALS.



They consist of Jungle sets, Map and Seal of States, Good Luck cards, Comics, with witty sayings and funny pictures, cards showing celebrated person, buildings, etc. In fact, there is such a great variety that it is not possible to describe them here. They are beautifully embossed in exquisite colors, some with glazed surfaces, and others in matt. Absolutely the handsomest cards issued.

Price 15c. for 25 cards by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.



The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price by mail, postpaid 10c.; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE INK BLOT JOKER.



Fool Your Friends.—The greatest novelty of the age! Have a joke which makes everybody laugh. More fun than any other novelty that

has been shown in years. Place it on a desk, tablecloth, or any piece of furniture, as shown in the above cut, near some valuable papers, or on fine wearing apparel. Watch the result! Oh, Gee! Price, 15c. each, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

SNAKE IN THE CAMERA.



To all appearances this little startler is a nice looking camera. The proper way to use it is to tell your friends you are going to take their pictures. Of course they are tickled, for nearly everybody wants to

pose for a photograph. You arrange them in a group, fuss around a little bit, aim your camera at them, and request the ladies to look pleasant. As soon as they are smiling and trying to appear beautiful, press the spring in your camera. Imagine the yell when a huge snake jumps out into the crowd. Guaranteed to take the swelling out of any one's head at the first shot.

Price 35 cents, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ELECTRIC PUSH BUTTON.



TON.—The base is made of maple, and the center piece of black walnut, the whole thing about 1 1/4 inches in diameter, with a metal hook on the back so that it may be slipped over edge of the vest pocket. Expose to view your New Electric Bell, when your friend will

push the button expecting to hear it ring. As soon as he touches it, you will see some of the liveliest dancing you ever witnessed. The Electric Button is heavily charged and will give a smart shock when the button is pushed.

Price 10c., by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE MAGIC DAGGER.



A wonderful illusion. To all appearances it is an ordinary dagger which you can flourish around in your hand

and suddenly state that you think you have lived long enough and had better commit suicide, at the same time plunging the dagger up to the hilt into your breast or side, or you can pretend to stab a friend or acquaintance. Of course your friend or yourself are not injured in the least, but the deception is perfect and will startle all who see it.

Price, 10c., or 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE MAGIC CARD BOX.



One of the best and cheapest tricks for giving parlor or stage exhibitions. The trick is performed as follows: You request any two persons in your audience to each select a card from an ordinary pack of cards, you then produce a small handsome box made to

imitate pebbled leather, which anyone may examine as closely as they will. You now ask one of the two who have selected cards to place his or her card inside the box, which being done, the lid is shut, and the box placed on the table. You then state that you will cause the cards to disappear and upon opening the box the card has vanished and the box found empty. The other card is now placed in the box; the lid is again closed and when the box is opened the first card appears as strangely as it went. Other tricks can be performed in various ways. You may cause several cards to disappear after they are placed in the box, and then you can cause them all to appear at once. You may tear a card up, place it in the box, and on lifting the cover it will be found whole and entire. In fact, nearly every trick of appearance and disappearance can be done with the Magic Card Box. Full printed instructions, by which anyone can perform the different tricks, sent with each box.

Price, 20c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.